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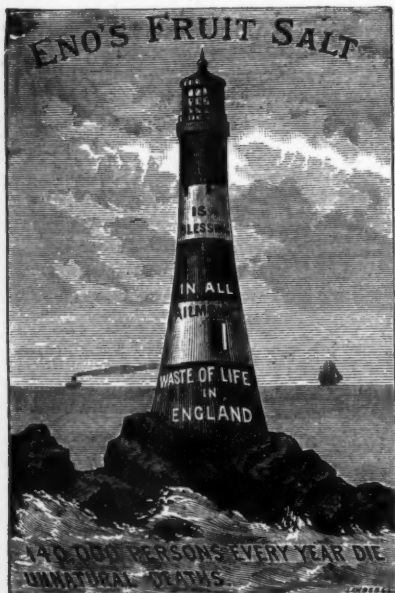
If it be possible, as much as in you lies, study to live at peace with all men.

WAR!

O World!
O men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime,
And slay, as if death had but this one gate?

BYRON.

WHAT IS MORE TERRIBLE THAN WAR?



OUTRAGED NATURE.—She kills and kills, and is never tired of killing, till she has taught man the terrible lesson he is so slow to learn—that Nature is only conquered by obeying her. For the means of prevention, and for preserving health by natural means, use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Its simple but natural action removes all impurities, thus preserving and restoring health. If its great value in keeping the body in health were universally known, no family would be without it.

THE HOME RULE PROBLEM.

In the political world Home Rule means negotiable ballast. 'In the sanitary world it means in the whole Metropolis upwards of 20,000 lives are still yearly sacrificed, and in the whole of the United Kingdom upwards of 100,000 fall victims to gross causes which are preventable. . . . England pays not less than £24,000,000 per annum (that is to say, about three times the amount of poor rates) in consequence of those diseases which the science of Hygiene teaches how to avoid ("and which may be prevented")'.—CHADWICK.

PASS IT BY IF YOU LIKE, BUT IT IS TRUE!

WHAT MIND CAN GRASP THE

LOSS TO MANKIND and the misery entailed that these figures reveal? What dashes to the earth so many hopes, breaks so many sweet alliances, blasts so many auspicious enterprises, as untimely death! to say nothing of the immense increase of rates and taxarising from the loss of the bread winners of families.

AT HOME MY HOUSEHOLD GOD! ABROAD MY VADE MECUM!

IMPORTANT TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.

A GENERAL OFFICER, writing from Ascot, on Jan. 2, 1886, says:—' Blessings on your "FRUIT SALT!" I trust it is not profane to say so, but, in common parlance, I swear by it. Here stands the cherished bottle, my little idol—at home, my household god; abroad, my *vade mecum*. Think not this the rhapsody of a hypochondriac. No; it is the outpouring of a grateful heart. I am, in common, I dare say, with numerous old fellows of my age (67), now and then troubled with a tiresome liver. No sooner, however, do I use your cheery remedy, than exit pain—'Richard is himself again!' So highly do I value your composition that, when taking it, I grudge even the sediment always remaining at the bottom of the glass. I give the following advice to those who have learned to appreciate its inestimable benefits:—

'When "ENO'S SALT" betimes you take,
No waste of this elixir make;

'But drain the dregs, and lick the cup
Of this the perfect pick-me-up.'

'EGYPT, CAIRO.—Since my arrival in Egypt, in August last, I have on three occasions been attacked by fever; on the first occasion I lay in hospital six weeks. The last attacks have been completely repulsed in a short time by the use of your valuable "FRUIT SALT," to which I owe my present health, at the very least, if not my life itself. Heartfelt gratitude for my restoration impels me to add my testimony to the already overwhelming store of the same, and in so doing I feel that I am but obeying the dictates of duty.—Believe me, Sir, gratefully yours, A CORPORAL, 19th Hussars, May 26, 1883.—Mr. J. C. ENO.'

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.—'A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit.'—ADAMS.

Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation.

SOLD BY ALL CHEMISTS. PREPARED ONLY AT

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' WORKS, LONDON, S.E., by J. C. Eno's Patent.





LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1890.

Virginie.

A TALE OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BY VAL PRINSEP, ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HE DEVELOPS IT.

VIRGINIE from her place at the *comptoir* was keeping a watch on Pinard. One by one she saw the rest of those who had finished their *déjeuner* leave the café, till Pinard alone remained. She saw Jacques fidgeting about the room, round the place where the *Capitaine* seemingly slept. She saw him approach the table and remove the plates, making an intentional clatter to wake the seemingly sleeping man. She was unaware that Jacques had cause to dread Pinard's vengeance, as she was ignorant of the affair of the Couronne d'Or, but she knew something would happen, and her heart beat quickly.

Pinard opened his eye, and gazed blankly at Jacques with the well-dissembled look of a man who was rousing himself from sleep.

'The *citoyen* desires anything else?' asked Jacques.

'Nothing at present,' answered Pinard sharply.

Jacques cleared away the plates on the table, and passing the *comptoir*, at which Virginie now sat, cold with terror, took from its place the bill prepared by Célimène, and placed it before the *Capitaine*.

The one-eyed warrior took it in his hand and ran his eye over the items. 'Not dear, my friend, considering the state of provisions in Paris at present. It is wonderful how thou managest to procure such dainties. How dost thou manage?' and he looked up with a smile at Jacques.

'How do I manage?' growled Jacques; 'why by paying for them.'

'And very praiseworthy it is, and excellent company thou hast at the house, my gallant *traiteur*. Collot d'Herbois! It is a pleasure to see him, when one can look him fearlessly in the face, as a true *sans-culotte* should.' Here Pinard folded the bill and placed it in his pocket; he then reached down his hat and grasped his stick preparatory to going, Jacques watching him the while.

'*Citoyen*,' said Jacques, 'it is usual to pay before leaving.'

'I believe so,' answered the other, swaggering to the door; then as he arrived opposite Virginie he turned to Jacques and said, 'I will send the little account, with others, to Colonel Chardon, *ci-devant* Comte de la Beauce, thy son-in-law.'

At that moment the little Jacques came running into the room, for it was the time the family ate their midday meal, after the work of the café was done. Little Jacques was a very pretty little lad of some four years old, and had a strong look of his father. Pinard paused before him, and, stretching out his long clawlike hand, placed it on the boy's head. 'Ah, Monsieur le Vicomte!' he cried, with an odious chuckle.

'My name is Jacques Chardon,' said the boy.

'Good boy!' cried Pinard; then passing his fingers of both hands round the boy's neck he added, 'a slender neck for the National Razor! *Bon jour*, my son. I shall come here to dinner to-morrow, *Citoyen* Le Blanc, and if Collot d'Herbois be not here no doubt some of his friends will be present. *Citoyenné*, I salute thee.' Here with a swaggering bow, and his hat lifted, Pinard left the room. When he got into the street he laughed gently; he would have given a great deal (if he had had it) to have turned, and seen the look of the family he had been torturing, but he felt his dignity would be compromised, and he strode on.

Confusion was indeed upon this family! Jacques was white with rage, while Virginie's cheek was colourless from the realisation of her worst anticipations. She succeeded in checking her father, who would have pursued the retreating Pinard. The daughter's less excitable nature grasped the danger of the situa-

tion. With steady gait she descended from her place and took her father's arm.

'Come,' she said, leading him through the door of their apartment. Célimène, hardly comprehending what had passed, followed with the boy, who alone was unmoved, inquiring with infantine curiosity who was 'the droll *citoyen*? And what did he mean by his national razor?' It was only when they gained the seclusion of their own room that they dared to look at each other's faces, and read the terror that each felt at this announcement, that their secret was known to one who would not scruple to use it.

'What is to be done, my daughter?' asked Jacques with trembling voice, in which indignation played a greater part than fear.

'Dost thou know this man, father?'

'Know him? He is the cause of all our trouble! It was he, and such as he, that drove me mad at the Couronne d'Or. This man I once thrashed and turned out of the house. See, it was the very day before——' Here the good fellow saw Célimène was present and stopped abruptly. 'What is to be done?' he asked again.

Virginie was so overwhelmed by the knowledge that she had brought this man to the house that she could say nothing. It was Célimène who spoke.

'Père Jacques,' she said, 'we must give the man what he wants, until we can take counsel either with M. Carnot or Etienne. Virginie will no doubt write to him, and ask his advice. Depend on it all will be well. After all, what have we done?' she asked cheerily. 'Has not Etienne fought and bled for his country? And haven't you, Père Jacques, done your duty in filling the insides of these men with dishes too good for them?'

Jacques shook his head sadly. 'These men have no sense of right,' he said. 'They would cool a man's choicest soup with the same breath that ordered him to the guillotine.' In truth all the *bourgeois* feeling of the man rebelled against the idea of giving his substance to nourish an enemy. It was with difficulty the two women could persuade him that it was the only course open to them. The idea preyed on his mind. If he had been by himself he would have rather risked his life. But when he saw the curly head of little Jacques, when he saw the lives of those that were dear to him depended on yielding, he at last gave way.

'The scoundrel!' he cried. 'Would that I had drawn my knife across his throat when I had him down. Such men fatten on this

revolution. Yet not for long! The time will come when law and order will be established through the land, and the guillotine be reserved for the necks of like *canaille*.'

'Maitre Jacques, thou speakest sensibly for once,' said a strange voice. It was Louison.

'Who asked thy opinion?' said Jacques angrily; 'thy tongue wags too freely, my girl.'

'That red nightcap becomes thee not,' answered Louison, placing her arms akimbo; 'Maitre Jacques, thou shouldst know better what to wear.'

It was not the first time a wordy warfare had been waged between these two. Célimène, whose occupation was always that of a peacemaker, had great difficulty in restraining the anger of Jacques, nor was peace restored till Louison was persuaded to withdraw.

From that time twice a day Pinard presented himself at the Café de la Grande Nation, coming early and staying till everyone had left. He would then swagger up to the two women and address some odious compliment to them. Sometimes he would borrow money, saying he had unfortunately come out without his purse. Though each time he made the same excuse, he accompanied it with a smile that seemed to show, in the most offensive manner, his sense of power over the family. Virginie would, without a word, hand him some assignats, too glad to purchase his absence by the sacrifice. It was Jacques who suffered most by the presence of this unwelcome guest. Pinard would give his orders to no one else. He insisted on Jacques hearing his comments on his dishes. He appealed to his neighbours to say whether he was not right in commending this dish and criticising that. In this fashion he humbled and trampled on his enemy in a way that gave him infinite satisfaction. His appetite was increased by the sight of the pain he caused. But had he known the conflict going on within the mind of his enemy, had he guessed that the beads of perspiration on Jacques's forehead arose from suppressed passion, that he was many times on the point of seizing Pinard by the throat and plunging his long knife into his false heart, that warrior might have been less comfortable over his well-cooked repasts.

Meanwhile Pinard did not quite neglect his vengeance. The second day he took his midday meal at the café he began to tell the tale of his treatment at the war. He quickly found the right ears into which to pour his woes. He had been the victim

of his patriotism. A *ci-devant* had driven him from the army, &c. He took care that neither Jacques nor the women should hear his tale. He would first drag down La Beauce, feasting meanwhile at the expense of his father-in-law. After that he would complete his vengeance on Le Blanc. There was no hurry. He enjoyed the power he exercised at the café too greatly to be desirous of ending it too quickly.

Two days after he heard that La Beauce had been summoned to Paris to give an account of the '*affaire Pinard*'!

The man to whom he had confided his story was a hanger-on of St. Just, who had been placed on the War Committee as a spy on Carnot, the War Minister. He told Pinard that they had long had suspicions of Carnot, but that he was necessary to the Government during the war. At the same time they were not sorry to have an opportunity of raising a scandal against one who, through his success, was getting a formidable rival. 'This Chardon is a *protégé* of Carnot's. Thy story tallies with the reports we have received. If it should prove true this man is a *ci-devant*, so much the worse for him.' That day Pinard was so pleased that he insisted on being supplied with two bottles of Jacques's wine, and as he passed the *comptoir* where Virginie was sitting, pale as a marble statue, he cocked his hat with a more martial swagger than ever, and kissed his fingers to the ladies with an expression so ludicrous, that Célimène was forced to laugh, though Virginie felt her blood freeze, as the ruffian, with unsteady gait, left the café.

CHAPTER L.

THE TROUBLE COMES.

THE month of Messidor ran out its thirty days in weary anxiety to these poor people, and Thermidor set in with its heat and glare. Pinard each day came to the café. The heat caused him to indulge in deeper draughts of Jacques's excellent Burgundy, and he seemed to be acquiring a familiarity with his way of life that drove Jacques mad. He even began to usurp an authority in the café itself.

'Citoyen Le Blanc,' he would say, 'the *citoyen* in the corner has thrice endeavoured to attract attention. See that thy men

bestir themselves. Jarnidieu! can a good patriot wait long for his drink in sultry Thermidor?"

'*Citoyenne*, pray bid Pierre hurry himself. Thy adorable *sang-froid* suits not thy position. One must not trifle with a part; better not to play it than play it badly.'

'The *citoyen*,' answered Célimène (for Virginie was struck dumb by the man's insolence), 'shows a want of civism. Is not Pierre an equal? Why should he grow hot that the *citoyen* should eat the quicker?'

A hoarse laugh caused Pinard to turn. It was the *Citoyen* Collot d'Herbois who was entering the room, and the *Capitaine* was silent, for the fear caused by this man had not abated.

The acquaintance who had listened to his accusation of La Beauce was sitting next to Pinard, and as Collot passed he gave him an ominous look that meant no good. This, too, Pinard noticed. When Collot had passed to his seat the man whispered, 'He is of the Carnot faction, let him beware! For all the airs he gave himself his power is really over!'

'And Chardon?' whispered Pinard. 'How goes on that little affair?'

'Chardon ought to arrive in Paris in two days. The order for his appearance before the committee included the name of his Major. They have both signified their willingness to appear. Have everything ready.'

Pinard was disconcerted. He had not expected his luxurious dream would end so soon. However, there was no help for it. So he poured into the ear of his friend the history of Jacques and Virginie. The man listened and took notes.

'Thy story again tallies with information we have received. *Citoyen* Le Blanc before the days of September denounced at the Jacobins the Comte de la Beauce, who had seduced his daughter. It was thought these two had emigrated, for his life was saved by one Rousselet during the September executions, and he has disappeared. This Madame Chardon was given out as another daughter. Evidently, here is something "suspect." It shall be seen to.' And the man placed his book in his pocket with the satisfaction of one who has a good bit of business to unravel.

Notwithstanding the realisation of worthy *Capitaine* Pinard's dreams of vengeance, the gallant warrior was not quite at his ease. He did not relish meeting the Colonel and Major Tamplin. He had hoped they would have been brought to Paris as 'suspects' in chains, as he had seen the prisoners sent by *Citoyen* Le Bon

arrive from Arras two days before. These two, his friend told him, were coming of their own free will, nor was La Beauce to be arrested till after his arrival. Carnot was not to be trifled with. He had consented to have the Colonel summoned to Paris, but nothing could make him sign the warrant for his arrest till he had had an opportunity of explaining his conduct. 'This Chardon appears to be one of his pets. He says he is a most valuable officer and one the country cannot afford to lose.' So whispered Pinard's friend, for whom Pinard had demanded a third bottle of Jacques's wine. He himself did not spare the delicious beverage, so that when he had to leave the room—last as usual—he was more unsteady than he had yet been. As he saluted Virginie he reeled against one of the tables. '*Sacrée aristocrate*,' he growled turning round, 'keep out of my way!' Then perceiving his mistake, he laughed in a sodden manner and stammered, 'Excuse, *citoyenne*. One must be patriotic. *A bas les aristos! n'est ce pas?*'

And chuckling to himself he left the house.

Jacques le Blanc, who had been watching his enemy, could with difficulty restrain himself.

'See the pig!' he whispered, white with rage. 'Drunk with my wine! My child, he insults me each day. I can bear it no longer. Were it not for thee I would have killed him, as he sat teaching me my own business!'

'Courage, father,' whispered Virginie, 'Etienne will soon be here. I have this day received a line from him. He is summoned to Paris on business, and hopes to reach us in a day or two.'

'Summoned to Paris!' cried Jacques. 'I like not the news! This is not the place for thy husband at present. Such brave birds should keep away while the nets are spread. And spread they are—all around—all around.' Jacques here spread his arms abroad.

But Célimène took the good fellow by the hand and led him from the room.

'Père Jacques, trust Heaven. All yet shall be well.'

'*Petite mignonne*,' said Jacques, patting her tenderly on the cheek, 'what should we be without thee?'

The next day, the 25th of July, on the 6th of the month Thermidor according to the Republican calendar, Pinard came again to the café. He had, as usual, left his purse behind and borrowed from Virginie, only he grumbled at the sum she gave him, and made himself so odious that from disgust she doubled

the money. Even then the ruffian seemed not content till Jacques came up with rage plainly marked on his countenance, when Pinard, with a discordant laugh and flashing eye, left the house. Virginie, as she watched him, fancied he turned round in the street and shook his fist at the place where he had so long feasted.

That night, as the family were preparing to retire to bed, a knock came at the door of the apartment. So unusual an occurrence filled them with terror. Louison was briskly going to open the door when Jacques started up and forbade her. He would himself go, he said.

Virginie and Célimène, listening with eager ears, heard the lock unfastened.

‘What dost thou want, woman?’ they heard Jacques ask.

‘Madame! I must speak with madame,’ said a woman’s voice.

‘Impossible,’ answered Jacques, ‘at this time of night; it would rouse suspicion.’

‘It is a case of life and death,’ pleaded the woman.

Virginie recognised the voice—it was Annette.

‘Father,’ she said, going to the door, ‘let her enter. Come in, Annette; what can bring you here at this hour?’

Annette entered the room. Her face was pale and haggard; there was a bruise on her cheek which had partially blackened one eye. Her dress was disordered and torn.

‘Virginie,’ expostulated Jacques, ‘it is impossible to allow this woman in.’

But Annette sunk on her knees.

‘Madame,’ she cried, lifting her hands towards Virginie, ‘I have come at the risk of my life! Pinard is mad drunk. He raves against you, against monsieur, and the colonel, your husband, and then he laughs and chuckles to himself, “I have them all! To-morrow they go to the guillotine! All! all! I have my revenge! *Vive la Sainte Guillotine!*” Ah! madame, I cannot tell what you have done to anger him in this way. But I know my husband, and have come to warn you. Save yourself while there is time.’

The woman poured her words forth with intense rapidity, pausing from time to time to cast a terrified look around, as though she expected to see her husband appear each minute!

Thunderstruck as the family were, they were moved by pity for this poor creature.

'Annette,' said Virginie, trying to raise her, 'calm yourself; all may not be so bad as you say.'

But Annette shook her head.

'Save yourself, madame!' she murmured; 'I know Pinard.'

Célimène, who had her wits about her, here brought a cup of wine, which she gave the poor creature, whom Virginie placed in a chair. Revived by the wine she repeated, 'Save yourself, madame!'

'Where have you left this man?' asked Jacques.

'He sleeps at present,' answered Annette. 'I must go back. He would kill me if he knew.' Here she started to her feet. 'Only be warned, madame; for Heaven's sake be warned!'

No persuasion would retain her, and no more could they learn from her. In her agitation all she could say was, 'Save yourself, madame!' And as the door shut behind her she reached her hands towards Virginie as though she would bless her, and murmured, 'You were very kind to him.'

Jacques was filled with rage and consternation.

'Ah, the *canaille*!' he cried, 'why did I not do as I wished? We are lost now. This man has denounced us. I care not for myself, but for you and the boy. If only we could save him! M. Aubert will see to his future. Ah, this Pinard! What are we to do? Virginie, thou hast a good head. Speak, my daughter. Why dost thou sit there?'

Jacques was so excited as to hardly know what he said. His face was flushed, and his eyes glittered strangely. Virginie sat still, showing no emotion; only her hands, which were folded in her lap, moved convulsively one over the other.

'If Etienne were here,' she murmured.

'Etienne!' cried Jacques; 'what good could he do? Etienne! she thinks of nothing but Etienne! Etienne could twist that blackguard's neck, and so could I for the matter of that. That wouldn't save us—or the boy. Ah, miserable man that I am!' And he burst into tears.

Célimène sobbed in the corner of the room.

Here a strange thing happened. Comfort came, and from a quarter least expected. It was Louison. She went to the chair where Virginie sat, and, leaning over, whispered—

'Madame would save the little Vicomte. Listen to me, then. Pierre has two rooms at the top of the house. Let Mademoiselle Célimène take the boy to him; no one will suspect her there, and Pierre is a good lad.'

Jacques bounded from his chair.

‘Louison, thou art a treasure!’ he cried. ‘I will mount at once.’

‘No, monsieur must stop here. He might meet some one. It is I will mount. No one will suspect me.’

‘It is the best thing to do,’ said Virginie, recovering herself. ‘Célimène will not be missed, and, through her, come what may, the boy will be saved.’

But Célimène demurred. ‘Why do you not go yourself, dear Virginie?’

‘Because I shall be wanted, of that I am convinced, and if I am not here they will search. No; Louison is right. Go, Louison, quick, and bring us word.’

The good girl darted out of the room. In anxious suspense they waited her return; at length, after half an hour, she entered.

‘That great lout, Pierre, was so sound asleep that I had great difficulty in waking him,’ she cried indignantly.

‘Does he consent?’ asked Virginie eagerly.

‘Pierre? Is it likely he would refuse, and he coming from Sèvres? Mademoiselle, all is ready. His rooms are not bad. He gives up one to you. We will get ready some things, and when all is quiet in the house we will carry the boy up with us.’

‘Will not you come too?’ asked Célimène; ‘I am frightened to go by myself.’

‘I?’ quoth Louison. ‘My place is here—by madame.’

‘Thou art a brave girl!’ cried Jacques, and in his excitement he seized her in his arms, and kissed her with a mighty smack on either cheek. He then drew forth his pocket-handkerchief and blew his nose with sonorous fervour.

During the bitter days of the Terror, when so much timidity was publicly displayed, a greater amount of unselfishness was shown than could have been believed by those who knew the way of the world. In this family, menaced with destruction, their principal thought was for the boy; and now that his safety was provided for, a weight seemed taken off the minds of all. Only Virginie softly went into the room where the little fellow slept peacefully, and, sitting down by his side, took his little hand in hers. As she watched his quiet slumber, the tears came for the first time to her eyes. Was it the last time she should so sit? Was she never to see her darling again? Never? Alas for the terrible word! She stooped over his pretty face, and kissed him so softly that he would not have stirred had not a hot drop fallen on his cheek.

He did but turn over and slept again. Which of us can fail to remember the many times a mother has so kissed us in our infant slumber? Among the many troubles that beset us in life do we think of these things? We take them as they come, with the selfishness born in us. We cry if they are not given us—and straightway we forget. They cost us nothing—why should we remember?

In after life little Jacques heard of the troubles of that night. Célimène would frequently talk about it to the little fellow, who was never tired of hearing how his mother loved him, even to depriving herself of his society.

In consideration for her mother's feelings they left Virginie alone with her child. But time passed quickly, and when everything was still in the house Célimène and Louison entered the room. There was no necessity to tell the poor mother that the hour had come. Tenderly she raised the little lad from his bed and wrapped him carefully in a blanket, his head reclining the while on her shoulder. Louison hastily made a bundle of necessaries; Célimène had already made her packet. Then Virginie took one long last kiss and surrendered her charge to the girl, while Louison shouldered her bundles. Silently they crept forth. At the door stood Jacques, pale and trembling: '*Tenez,*' he whispered to Célimène, 'take this and use it for the boy; give some to my brave Pierre,' he added with a trembling voice. The two women crept upstairs, leaving Jacques and his daughter standing by the side of the half-closed door, eagerly listening.

How long they stood there neither could have told; at length Louison's footstep was heard descending: 'It is all right,' she whispered; 'they are comfortable and safe. The dear boy did not wake.' Then as they once more stood in the little sitting-room she came to Virginie. 'See, madame,' she whispered, 'I have brought you this!' It was a bright golden curl. Virginie seized it with a cry of delight, and, raising it to her lips, fainted into the arms of her faithful maid.

CHAPTER LI.

JEAN DURAND.

A TALL, gaunt man Jean Durand had always been, but now since he had become a soldier, with his hair plaited in two long meshes on either side of his thin face, the expression of which was not improved by a great scar down his right cheek, with his long rusty-coloured moustache streaked with grey and his wolfish eyes, he might have served to frighten any naughty child into extreme goodness. He was, moreover, taciturn and uncommunicative, in which he was unlike Pinard, who, like most Frenchmen, loved talk and was fond of boasting. Yet while Pinard had been cordially disliked in the 7^{me} Cavalerie, Jean was much beloved, and his promotion to the grade of sergeant was most popular. To the younger recruits he was tender to a degree, and many a time took the blame of their faults on his shoulders. Yet 'Père Jean,' as he was nicknamed, was not to be trifled with. He spoke but seldom, but when he did speak he had to be obeyed, nor was it safe to try to dispute his decision. Once or twice, on some unthinking youngster giving a sarcastic reply to some order, the Père Jean's eyes flashed in so ominous a manner, and their expression became so terrible, that the affrighted youngster at once apologised with abject submission. Jean did not mind a joke. He heard himself called 'Old Wolf' or 'Old Dog' and smiled. When off duty his presence did not check merriment, and he seemed to enjoy the rough horse-play of his comrades, though he never joined in it. But duty was a different thing. It was then that Père Jean became a wolf indeed. When he charged with the regiment his face was awful to behold. It was noticed that Jean always made his way to his Colonel's side, no matter where he was placed, and it was also said that he was more occupied in protecting his chief than in caring for himself.

Never did the 7^{me} engage without the sergeant receiving some memento of the fray. His constitution, as had been remarked by the doctor at Chartres, was that of a peasant, in which Nature had been left to do her work for herself. And Nature worked so well with this man that his wounds seemed to heal as if by magic, leaving only the scars, that added in no small degree to his stern appearance.

One curious quality this rough soldier possessed. He seemed

to know by intuition when a letter arrived from Virginie for his Colonel. On such occasions he was always present, if he did not himself bring the epistle to its owner. As La Beauce read Jean would stealthily watch his face, and when the reading was over he would catch his master's eye with a look of mute inquiry, which the Comte well understood.

'All is well, my friend,' he would say, placing his hand on the faithful fellow's shoulder, and Jean was satisfied. Sometimes when, in the selfishness of her love, Virginie remembered to send a message for Jean himself (alas! it was but seldom), and La Beauce read the words aloud, the sergeant would stroke his moustache, and his eyes would grow soft, as a tear would form, and, running down the long furrow of a scar, drop on to his weather-stained uniform. Then would the sergeant shun for a time the noise of his fellows, and, finding some quiet spot, pace backwards and forwards, with his head bowed to the ground. Once an inquisitive recruit managed to approach sufficiently near to hear the sergeant muttering to himself as he walked. The sentences were incoherent, but from time to time so deep a sigh burst on the listener's ears, that in shame he retreated, and told his comrades that 'Père Jean is either the victim of a hopeless affection, or else that the "Old Wolf" had some terrible crime on his conscience!'

The 7^{me} Cavalerie formed part of the army under General Jourdain at Charleroi. For several days 80,000 men had been bombarding the town, which surrendered on June 25. But scarcely had they taken possession, when the Austrians, too late to save, commenced a furious attack on the French position. Hardly pressed by the enemy, the French were in danger of losing the village and redoubt of Fleurus, which gave its name to the battle, when General Dubois, commanding the cavalry, made a determined charge on the enemy's infantry, rolling it back and capturing fifty cannon. Dashing on with their wonted *élan* the 7^{me}, side by side with another regiment, were charged, in their turn, by the Austrian Cuirassiers, who now had an opportunity of revenging the reverse of Neerwinden. Already in some disarray, the French were thrown into complete confusion. Shattered and broken, the regiments were mixed together in their wild retreat. In vain La Beauce strove to rally his men. The Cuirassiers pressed them closely, so in one headlong stream they were driven back.

Jean Durand, riding as usual close to his Colonel, had, strange

to say, on this day escaped hurt. As he was hurried along he found by his side one of the *sous-officiers* of the regiment who had charged so bravely by the side of the 7^{me}. The man's face was blackened by the discharge of a pistol at close quarters, his head was bent helplessly on his horse's neck, he seemed weak and likely to fall.

'*Allons!*' shouted Jean, 'courage, my friend,' and he passed his arm round the man's waist, and supported him as they galloped on. Side by side and thus interlocked they at length gained a place where the regiments could reform. The man seemed to recover and turned to his preserver.

'Comrade,' he cried, 'I owe thee much,' and he held out his hand.

Then Jean for the first time saw his face. His own grew ashy pale, and, instead of taking the extended palm, he turned his horse and went his way.

For several days after the battle of Fleurus, Jean Durand was noticed to be in great agitation. More frequently than ever he sought his solitary promenade, and those who watched heard him talking much to himself, and gesticulating wildly with his long arms. 'The "Old Wolf" is full of remorse,' they whispered.

After much manœuvring, the French army in triumph entered Brussels, and had a few days' rest.

It so happened that the 7^{me} Cavalerie was quartered next to the regiment that had charged by its side at Fleurus. There was much fraternisation and good feeling displayed between the regiments, but Jean Durand was more restless than ever.

One evening he sought out one of his brother sergeants, and said:

'Comrade, I have a favour to ask of thee.'

'I grant it, *mon brave!*' cried the other.

'I wish you to come with me as my second in an affair of honour!'

The other laughed loud. It seemed a preposterous idea that the Père Jean should be engaged in such an affair! But Jean placed his hand on his friend's shoulder.

'This will be an affair of life or death,' he said quietly.

'So much the better. Shall I not be honoured in standing by a comrade?'

'Come then,' said Jean.

Jean had his sabre girt to his side. The other took his, and the two men walked off together.

In the French army, even under the Republic, duels were not infrequent. For a slight offence, for a sneer, or an inopportune remark, two men frequently crossed their blades. Sergeant Picot, being of a touchy, irritable disposition, had himself been engaged in more than one affair. Perhaps it was for that Jean had sought him for a second.

Side by side the two marched to the quarters of the next regiment. There Jean inquired for Sergeant Gomerot.

'Gomerot,' cried the sergeant of the guard; 'a stout fellow, Gomerot! What can the *citoyen* sergeant want with him?'

'I have business with the sergeant,' answered Jean quietly. Word was passed for Sergeant Gomerot, and quickly he appeared.

'*Diable!*' cried he on seeing Jean, 'the sergeant who saved me in the charge at Fleurus,' and he held out his hand.

Jean glared at the man, taking no notice of the outstretched hand; and Sergeant Picot, who was watching the scene with some interest, afterwards declared, that he had never seen such hate depicted on a human face as on that of the 'Old Wolf.'

'Sergeant Gomerot,' growled Jean in a voice discordant and grating, 'I saved your life then; I come now to take it away, or die. We two cannot live on the same earth. Come,' and he stretched his arm and pointed to the gate of the town.

Gomerot looked at him with astonishment. 'I—sergeant!' he said. 'One day save a life and ten days afterwards seek to take it! What does this mean?'

'It means,' hissed Jean, coming close to Gomerot, 'it means that my name is Jean Durand! Jean Durand, to whom you owe a wife and child! Jean Durand, whom you struck down from behind, like a coward, that you might take your vengeance on a helpless woman and poor suffering boy. Unless you are a coward, come!' and again he pointed to the gate. Picot told afterwards that Gomerot grew pale and trembled when he heard Jean; 'and no wonder,' added the sergeant, 'our Père Jean was not a pleasant sight.' But Gomerot was no coward. In the presence of his comrades, of whom there were many present, he offered no expostulation.

'Wait a minute,' he cried, and he re-entered the barrack to reappear shortly with his sabre, and a comrade to act as second.

The four men silently marched through the gate. In their wake several of the loungers around followed. It was a boon to have such an amusement this hot evening in July. Gomerot was a determined man and knew his weapon. The honour of the

regiment was at stake. So by the time the seconds had found a quiet spot, there was quite a little crowd assembled.

The principals took off their coats and bared their arms. As they stood in position they looked not badly matched. Jean was the taller of the two, but Gomerot's broad shoulders and long arms gave indications of strength, and he handled his sabre as though he was well used to his weapon. Picot noticed that while, during the preliminary arrangements, Gomerot's eyes were restless and unsteady, Jean never turned his from his adversary, whom he watched as a cat does a mouse.

No attempt was made at reconciliation. No explanation was given. It seemed understood between these two that one must die.

The men were placed opposite each other and their sword points brought together; then the two seconds stepped back. For a moment the two swords rested together as the two eyed each other and sought an opening. Suddenly Gomerot made a quick cut, the blade flashed in the sun, but the sharp click that followed showed that the blow had been parried. Twice more the swords met, and the angry sparks flew from them as they clashed together. Then Gomerot disengaged and lunged. The thrust was parried, and Jean returned by a cut at his adversary's head. Like lightning the sabre flashed, but Gomerot with great activity avoided the blow, which whistled through the air without doing any harm.

'When I saw that,' Picot afterwards recounted, 'I trembled for our Jean. There was a pause, and each man eyed his opponent. The "Old Wolf" was admirable in his *sang-froid*, though his eyes, which we usually can hardly see beneath his shaggy eyebrows, seemed to blaze with hate; his position was solid and good. But Gomerot appeared to me the better swordsman. Again there was a sharp blow, *en second*, which Jean parried, though not entirely, and the blade just reached his temple. Then rage seemed to get the better of our Jean. He made two terrific blows at Gomerot's head in quick succession, and the second I saw beat down the guard and take effect. Then with a roar, the like of which I have never heard, Jean shouted, "For Petit Jean!" and as he cried, before Gomerot had recovered, he thrust his sabre deep into his chest. The man fell with a groan. I was so absorbed in the aspect of our comrade I knew not what happened to the other. For, as his enemy fell, Jean raised his sword to heaven and cried: "At last thou art revenged!"'

and then, falling on his knees, he murmured, "Petit Jean, Petit Jean!" Thinking he was perhaps worse hurt than I imagined at first, I went up to him. Would you believe it? the man was sobbing! I then turned to Gomerot. There was no mistake there; he was dying. With great effort he muttered something that his second, in whose arms he lay, said was a wish to speak with Jean. It was my duty to convey the message to my principal, so I stepped up to him and tapped him on the shoulder. "He would speak with you," I said.

"What! is he not dead?" asked Jean; and he rose from his knees and came to the dying man, standing before him with his arms folded. No tears were there for the man he had killed, only the old look of hatred. Gomerot murmured something his second only could hear.

"He bids you stoop, he cannot speak."

Jean stooped down, and I too knelt by the poor fellow, for the affair seemed most mysterious.

Gomerot made an effort, and in a low voice said, "I would have saved Marie."

Jean's eyes, fixed on the man's face, seemed to glow with fire. "And Petit Jean?" he hissed. Gomerot's eyes closed. He did not answer.

"You thought I was dead and you would have saved her. Go to her now, and tell her you would have killed her husband and her son, and yet hoped she would love you. Go and tell her I have avenged her—and Petit Jean——" But Gomerot here gave a sharp cry, the blood rushed from his mouth, there were one or two spasms, and all was over. Jean watched him with a stony stare. I placed my hand on his shoulder. "Come," I said, "we must report this to our Colonel."

Without a word he rose and followed me, leaving poor Gomerot with his comrades; and, cried Picot, 'for the life of me I can make neither head nor tail of this affair.'

In the inquiry held as to the death of Sergeant Gomerot it was proved that everything had been done according to rule. Motives were not inquired into. There had been some cause of offence sufficient to make the duel appear necessary to both these men. Gomerot had accepted the challenge, and that, in the eyes of the military tribunal, was sufficient. That the Republic was the loser was regrettable, and, as Jean Durand had been the cause of the loss, he was reproved for his clumsiness in causing the death of his adversary, when honour would have been

satisfied by the drawing of blood ; and to mark their sense of the untowardness of the affair, a nominal punishment of a week's arrest was pronounced. Jean smiled grimly when he was told he ought to have been satisfied in inflicting a slight wound. He offered no word of explanation. He bowed to the court and retired.

'*Diable!*' said the colonel of Gomerot's regiment to Colonel Chardon ; 'thou hast there a grim soldier. I would not have him opposite me in the field !'

'And yet,' answered La Beauce, 'there is no kinder-hearted man in the army.'

'Possibly—to his friends.' The two colonels saluted, and each went his way.

The whole affair was a mystery to La Beauce. It was hard for him to suppose that Jean Durand could have received an insult at the hands of Gomerot. Men of reserved habits, who are not frequenters of wine shops, or meddlers in other people's affairs, men who are not swashbuckling bravos seeking quarrels, or exciting them by offensive bragging, seldom lay themselves open to insult. In any matter that concerned himself or Virginie, La Beauce felt sure that Jean would have fought and died, nor, in thinking over the evidence before the court, could he imagine any more likely cause for the duel, and its disastrous termination, than that this Gomerot should have said something about him—possibly recognised in him a *ci-devant* aristocrat. Gomerot—the name was not strange to him. The Colonel thus pondered on the subject while he was walking to his quarters.

CHAPTER LII.

JEAN'S STORY.

AT the door of his quarters he found Jean himself, who saluted gravely, and informed him that a letter had arrived. When La Beauce entered his apartment he found Jean had as usual followed him. He took up the letter, which was from Virginie, and opened it. As he read, Jean, who was watching the expression of his face, saw a cloud gathering. The letter was not a long one. La Beauce read it twice, and the second reading brought even a graver expression on his countenance. At that moment Major Tamplin entered the room. Lately the intimacy between these

two had greatly increased; the Colonel was more taken each day by the honest manliness of his major, while to Tamplin the confidence and friendship of a man like La Beauce were a source of great satisfaction. He, too, quickly saw the look of anxiety on his friend's face.

'Bad news, Colonel? I trust nothing is the matter with madame or the boy?' and he placed his hand with affectionate intimacy on La Beauce's shoulder.

'They are well,' answered La Beauce.

'That's good! What then is the trouble?'

'Jean,' said La Beauce, 'be so good as to shut the door.'

Jean did as he was told, having first ascertained that there were no listeners. He then placed himself before the shut door and listened with intense anxiety.

'My friend,' said La Beauce, 'there is, I fear, trouble brewing; listen to what my wife says,' and he read:

'A man of the name of Pinard has appeared at the café. He says he knows you, and I fear he is no friend, although when I first saw him he boasted of your friendship. Anyhow, he makes himself quite at home here, and is inclined to use his boasted intimacy with you to extract whatever he wants from my father. I beg you will enlighten me as to this man, and instruct me how to check his insolent pretensions.'

Tamplin rapped out a military oath, of great force and vigour. In his corner of the room Jean stood motionless, but with eyes glaring as they glared on Gomerot two days before.

'My wife,' said 'La Beauce, 'has learnt to write in a most guarded manner. What she says here means a great deal. This Pinard, having tried to blackmail me, and failed, now is endeavouring to blackmail my wife and father-in-law. How are we to stop him?'

'It's serious,' said Tamplin.

Here Jean advanced, and in the harsh, discordant voice in which he always spoke when deeply moved, said:

'Colonel, give me leave to return to Paris, and Pinard shall no longer trouble madame.'

Tamplin laughed. 'Here's a Paladin!' he cried; 'having slain the crack *sabreur* of the 2^{me} Dragons, Pinard would be but child's-play to him!'

Jean darted a look at the laughing Major and growled:

'Thou knowest not what I owe to madame!'

'I at least know thy devotion,' said La Beauce kindly. 'The

removal of Pinard may do more harm than good now; he may already have set the terrible machinery of the Revolution to work.'

'Let us trust not!' cried Tamplin, and then he swore again a terrible oath. 'I am a Republican, yet would I crush all these men who disgrace the Republic, and that boy St. Just the first of all. Not but there's good in the lad,' he added. 'While he was with us, things marched brightly enough. Terror is a great incentive, though I hate it, for it makes cowards of brave men. It is the remains of the ancient *régime*. It is for slaves to fight the enemy, because they fear them less than their masters. To us who strive to be free, and will be free, let glory and the cause of the nation be the motive. So can we defeat our enemies without blushing for ourselves.'

The worthy Tamplin was fond of hearing himself speak, in which he resembled many other good men.

'Meanwhile what is to be done?' asked La Beauce.

Tamplin stopped in the midst of his eloquence and scratched the side of his weather-beaten nose. But he only paused for a minute.

'Pinard! Pinard!' he cried, 'we all know Pinard! I have had to deal with twenty Pinards before now. The Republic is full of Pinards! I said before, give him rope. I say so again. Pinard likes his comforts. He will find them with thy father-in-law. Put up with the blackmail for the moment till we see better what to do. Pinard will not hurry to slay the golden goose; let him be.'

Tamplin's advice seemed very good to La Beauce. 'Thou sayest well,' he said; 'I will write to madame at once.' Then turning to Jean he said, 'My friend, I have a message for thee too, and it seems to come very *à propos* after our morning's occupation. Listen then. "Petit Jacques sends much love to his friend Jean. He says that he is astonished that so kind and good a man should be occupied in killing other men, even though they may be enemies of his country."'

When he finished, La Beauce looked up at Jean's face; the sergeant's eyes were filled with tears.

'*Mon Colonel*,' he said, 'I owe madame an explanation.' Tamplin, in whose experience of men so many Pinards had occurred, had never met with another Jean Durand. He looked upon him as a curiosity, and in his shrewd way was always on the alert to study the character of one he considered unique. He had seen

the soft side of Jean's nature, having been present on several occasions when La Beauce received his letters from Paris. He had also noticed Jean's conduct in the field, and his watchful care of his Colonel. But he knew nothing of Jean's former life, and consequently did not possess the key to the mystery which caused these contradictions. He could only speculate.

'Tell me,' he asked, keenly eyeing Jean, 'this Gomerot, was he a man like Pinard?'

'Gomerot is dead!' growled Jean.

'What explanation then am I to give your mistress?' asked La Beauce, who, in the midst of his new anxieties, was troubled with the idea that Jean's duel with Gomerot arose from his possible denunciations of himself.

'Tell madame,' said Jean with an effort, 'that there are some things no man can forgive and forget. That injuries that have left their mark on a man's life, that have cost him all that made this life happy, must be revenged if a man is to live. Gomerot and I could not live. I told him so when I met him. He thought I was dead, but, seeing me alive, he recognised the truth of what I said. It was my turn, and Gomerot is dead.'

As Jean spoke, his words seemed to gather in intensity. A change came over the whole man, and as he finished there was a look of savage triumph on his face, that contrasted strangely with the tenderness with which he received Virginie's message. Tamplin, wondering at the change, silently marked the intensity of this man's passion.

'My good Jean,' said La Beauce, 'I have no wish to intrude on thy history. I know enough of its sadness to respect the silence thou hast ever preserved. But, with this new anxiety on my mind, I would wish to know if this Gomerot was not from our country. It seems to me that his name is familiar to me.'

'He was from Plessis-sur-Eure, a blacksmith;' then with an effort Jean added, 'See, *mon Colonel*, I talk not of other people's affairs, and have never told of my own, but once for all I must speak. I could not say that I have to say before madame. She is too good to understand the passion of a man, such as I am. To thee, then, I will tell the story of my life, and thou shalt judge.' Here Tamplin rose from his chair as though he would go. 'Rest thou too, Major. Thou too shalt judge between me and this Gomerot!' Tamplin placed a chair for Jean, but he did not seem to see it. He stood looking straight in front of him, and

passed his rough hand over his eyes, as if to recall the past. And when he began to speak he sometimes clutched the back of the chair Tamplin had offered him, and sometimes moved one hand over the other in a sort of agony.

'I was born,' he said, 'near Plessis-sur-Eure, on the estate of Marquis de Boissec, on whose property my father was a considerable farmer. From my earliest years I myself have led a wild, roving life. The quiet of the farm was distasteful to me, the tyranny of M. de Boissec's agent incensed me, and I became the man thou rememberest me, M. le Comte.' Here Jean paused, for his eye fell on Tamplin.

'Mind not me,' cried the Major; 'the secret of M. le Comte has been known to me for some time.'

'While I was still at my father's farm I met and loved Marie. She was the prettiest girl of the country side, and I—well, there was no one there who was my match in strength and fearlessness, and women love such qualities in a man; so Marie loved me. Among my rivals was this Gomerot. He was the only one who was a match for me in strength, and he was more than my match in cunning. Gomerot was in favour at Boissec. The young Comte petted him, for Gomerot was an expert in shoeing horses, and was knowing too in many of their ailments and diseases. Gomerot loved Marie, but she preferred me, and he quickly found that his pretensions were useless. Rage filled his heart. Since he could not succeed, he determined I too should fail. So he stirred up the young Comte; he pointed out Marie to him. The rights of the seigneurs were in those days in force. What maiden dared resist? Confident in success, M. le Comte proceeded with all the assurance of his class. With the assistance of Gomerot he tried to carry Marie off by force, and would have done so had I not been by. I rescued her, nor did M. le Comte escape without marks of my vengeance. But from that moment I was an outcast, and with Marie lived the life of an outcast. Soon after the gamekeeper of my enemy caught me, and, having by that time succeeded his father, it was by the orders of M. le Marquis, my rival, that I was lashed and scarred as though I was a dog. It was on thy woods, M. le Comte, that I found a home, it was thy forbearance that enabled me to erect the miserable hovel in which I sheltered my wife. It was there my children were born, and there they all died, one after the other, of fever and starvation, all but one, my *Petit Jean*, my last, my pretty son!' Here Jean paused and drew his rough palm across his eyes.

'I did not love thee then, M. le Comte; I placed thee in the same rank as M. le Marquis de Boisseac and the rest. In our province great nobles were scarce. You two were the only great proprietors. I did not know thy heart then, I attributed thy forbearance to disdain. Among all the haters of the aristocrats I was the fiercest, I and Gomerot. He, too, had been ill treated by the Marquis; he, too, had cause for revenge. I know not what it was. I care not. I did not know then that it was he had urged his master to satisfy his passion on this defenceless girl, hoping in the future to supply his place. Having tried to avenge himself through the Marquis on me, he now tried to avenge himself through me on the Marquis. It was he excited my fury; it was he who really planned the burning of the château, putting me always forward as the instigator. Call to mind, M. le Comte, the night when you found madame at my cottage. During the hours she was there nursing my boy, can I ever forget it? Oh, *mon Dieu!*' cried Jean in his agony, 'can I not see her now? Petit Jean, so restless with the terrible fever that had already carried off the others, she lulled to rest, soothing him as only an angel could. Ah! during those hours a change seemed to come over me. I saw all was not bad in the world, that even among the rich and great there were kind hearts and bountiful pities; and, when the men headed by Gomerot came to fetch me to consummate the revenge of my lifetime, for the first time I drew back. I refused to accompany them. I bore all the taunts of Gomerot with patience. I was called coward, renegade, traitor, but I would not leave my boy. So they went without me. Well! Boisseac was burnt. Then, M. le Comte, thou camest. I was overwhelmed at the offer I received. For the first time fortune seemed to smile on me. I saw my wife in comfort, my child well and happy, everything to make life prosperous. And, as I walked back, after I had escorted you and madame, I seemed to be in the heavens.'

'Alas! there was no such happiness in store for me. Perhaps I had not deserved it then. What happiness I have had during my life came after my severest trial, and was due not to those of my own class, but to monsieur and his sainted wife. And yet,' cried Jean, turning to Major Tamplin, 'when I first saw the angel who has since won me back to life and reconciled me to living, I had all the thoughts of a murderer upon me. Thank God that He held back my hand! that He caused me to listen to that voice, which from the first seemed to entrance me, instead of striking, as I had intended, without giving my victim the

chance of pleading for herself. There was no fear in her eyes as they met mine. Had there been, I should have struck. But no. They seemed to look into my heart, and when with her sweet voice she spoke of my Petit Jean with infinite pity, I, who was on the point of felling her to the ground for the sake of the few valuables I saw upon her, would have fallen to the ground myself and kissed her feet! May Heaven's blessing come upon her and hers. Ah, you Republicans believe not in God and His mercy! Can you have suffered as I have? Can you have seen your little ones tossing on a bed of fever, and you helpless to alleviate their pains? Can you then think that the recovery is the result of chance, and that there is nothing above you to regulate and ordain such things? It is not in the battle or in the excitement of life that we think of this, but in the hours of stillness and watching, of sickness and direful weakness, such as I have suffered.'

'Perchance thou art right,' said Tamplin gravely as Jean paused. La Beauce said not a word. He sat with his hand over his brow so that his face was concealed from the two others.

'I had scarcely returned in my house, I was still telling my Marie of our good fortune, when I heard the discordant sounds of the approaching rabble. At the shouting and singing of these men I rushed forth from the room in which Petit Jean still slept, thinking to quiet them. Alas! M. de Boisse's wine had done its work, and they were mad drunk. In my rage I swore at the men I had till then thought my brothers; I seized one man by the throat to check his howling, and dashed him to the ground, where he lay senseless. But I was unarmed and they were many. Still I fought and raged till my right arm was broken, and I received a terrible blow on my head that felled me to the ground. As I fell, I saw it was Gomerot struck that blow, and, as I lay there, with the senses half beaten out of me, I heard his voice crying, 'Burn the traitor's house,' and then came another blow and I heard no more. I learnt the truth when I recovered. I heard all the hideous tale from those there. One by one I sought them all out, and from all I gleaned the same story—Gomerot! always Gomerot! Maddened with drink, they were willing agents in destruction, yet, when they saw Gomerot strike me when I lay on the ground, they cried shame. Gomerot said he would go into the house to see if any one was there. He went to tempt Marie with her life, and failed, and then he set fire himself to the thatch of the house, saying there was no one there, and that Jean Durand had

lied when he talked of his sick child; and those two innocent beings perished without a word! Perished horribly! murdered by Gomerot. When I learnt this I swore that I would seek that man out and slay him. I searched the whole country for him, but he had gone! It was said that, during the sack of Boisseac, he had succeeded in possessing himself of some of the valuables of M. le Marquis—he, and he alone, knew where they were kept—and that he had gone away to enjoy his ill-gotten gains. I saw him first at Fleurus, where I saved his life, not knowing who he was. He was blackened with smoke and singed with fire, but I recognised him at last. What need I say more? I waited till he recovered, for I would have him at no disadvantage, and then I slew him. Who shall say I was wrong? Not thou, M. le Comte, nor thou, Major Tamplin! It is for this I have opened my lips. For, M. le Comte, thou wilt put my story in the right light before madame, whose good opinion I value more than life itself, so that she may not say when I meet her, “My son, Jean Durand is a man of blood.” Thou wilt do this for me, M. le Comte, since to her I could not speak as I have done before you two? In her infinite goodness she would not understand that Gomerot and I could not be alive together after what had passed. She would have bid me forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. Alas! it was not in my nature to forgive, yet as my sabre passed through his breast I felt a shiver pass through my heart. I lost sight of his hated face as he fell, and Marie and Petit Jean appeared before me as I had seen them last, and the joy I had hoped to have felt at the consummation of my vengeance seemed to die within me. It was only when I heard him, with his last dying breath, tell me that he had tried to save Marie, when I saw through all his cowardly plans, that I felt I had done right. And I ask you two, Was it not so?’

There was a pause as Jean finished. His voice had become strangely soft during the latter part of his story. During his last appeal his words were even broken by sobs, and as he ended he wore so piteous a look that Tamplin rose from his chair and embraced him.

‘Thou art a brave man, Jean,’ he cried, ‘and no one, unless he were a coward or a priest, would dare to say thou wert to blame.’

Then La Beauce took him by the hand.

‘Jean,’ he said, ‘few have suffered as thou hast. Who shall judge thee, my friend? Not I, who tremble now for the safety of my wife and child. Nor will she, who knows what suffering is,

and who believes that it is on high alone that thou, and I, and all mankind, can alone be judged justly and rightly. Have thou no fear, then, my friend. Virginie knows too well thy loving, faithful heart to doubt thee.'

Here Jean sank on his knees and raised the Comte's hand to his lips with the simple respectful reverence common under the old *régime*, but which had quite disappeared since the Republic had been declared.

Major Tamplin stood by and twisted his long moustache. If the truth were told, Jean did not fall in his estimation therefrom.

For the next three days La Beauce lived in a state of great anxiety. He wrote off to Carnot begging him to watch over Virginie in his absence, reminding him of his promise to do so. He wrote to Virginie recommending her to submit to the black-mail of Pinard, assuring her that he would soon contrive an excuse to return to Paris and confront him.

Meanwhile the French army remained strangely inactive, allowing their opponents to retreat in safety, and occupying themselves in reducing some few unimportant places on the frontier of Holland. So it was at Brussels, four days after his reception of Virginie's letter, that Colonel Chardon received notice that his presence was demanded in Paris to explain the *affaire Pinard*, and that Major Tamplin was to accompany him. Another colonel was for the time appointed to the 7^{me} Cavalerie.

So these two, with Jean, who had got leave to join them, journeyed on to Paris by the lumbering diligence, that took eight days to cover the distance from Brussels to the capital. Passing through many towns, in those hot July days, they found how thoroughly the revolutionary tyranny was established. In every town travellers' papers were examined, and woe betide him who had neglected to have all in order.

As La Beauce drew near Paris his soul sank more and more within him, nor was Tamplin without some apprehension. Many were the oaths that worthy muttered to himself at the change that had taken place since he joined the army. Less than two years had passed, yet in two years how much history had been enacted!

When they rolled through the streets of Paris on the evening of July 25 (7th of the month Thermidor according to the new style), they scarcely recognised the gay city, so silent were its streets and so deserted its usually busy places of public resort. Anxious at once to see his wife, La Beauce found that here again

tedious formalities had to be gone through ; commissioners insisting on examining all papers, identifying all individuals, and taxing the patience of all ; nor was any one allowed to take away from the bureau the smallest parcel, it being after dark. It was not till past ten at night that he was able to escape, and take his way, accompanied by Tamplin and Jean, to the Café de la Grande Nation.

CHAPTER LIII.

PARIS IN THE MONTH THERMIDOR.

THERE was some delay after La Beauce had rung the bell at his house-door before the *concierge* opened to him. At length the man appeared, accompanied by his wife.

‘Who are you, and what do you want ?’ cried the woman, over the shoulder of her husband.

‘I am Colonel Chardon,’ said La Beauce, ‘and I come home to my family.’

‘Thou must not enter,’ shrieked the woman.

‘My good woman,’ expostulated La Beauce.

‘Shut the door, Paul,’ cried the woman. ‘The patrol will be round in a minute, and we must not allow them to find our door open.’

‘Nay, but I must come in,’ said La Beauce, putting his foot against the door to prevent its being shut in his face. ‘Cannot a man enter his own house at any time of night ?’

‘Shut the door, thou fool !’ cried the woman to her husband. ‘Who knows if they may not all three be “suspects.”’

‘If the *citoyen’s* papers should be in order,’ growled the man, doubtingly.

‘Of course they are in order. Have we not come this minute from the Committee of the Section ? Thou art exceeding thy rights, my friend, in refusing to let us in.’

‘If the *citoyen* assured me his papers are correct,’ hesitated the man.

‘—,’ swore Tamplin, using a coarse and very Republican intensity of objurgation. ‘If thou open not at once I’ll fetch the guard of the Section and batter down the — door.’

The man opened at once. ‘At least,’ he said mildly, ‘do me the pleasure of showing me your papers.’

The three men followed the *concierge* into his den, where the

concierge's wife seated herself on the only chair, and kept muttering abuse of the simplicity of her husband, while he examined the papers.

'Imbecile!' she muttered, 'they are "suspects." Well, if thou wishest to coin money on the Place de la Révolution thou mayest. For me, I go to the Section on the first sign of day to denounce these men.'

'Silence!' growled the man. 'I know what I do.'

'So thou didst say before madame was taken. Thou art ever a fool, like all men, when there is a pretty face in question.'

'Madame?' cried Jean, and he seized the woman by the shoulder. 'Madame? What madame?'

'Pretty Madame Chardon. *Ci-devant aristocrate*,' laughed the woman.

'What sayest thou of her?' cried La Beauce.

'Placed in the national strong box,' answered the woman.

'Is that true, man?' asked La Beauce, furiously.

'Two days ago, with Citoyen le Blanc.'

La Beauce heard no more; followed by Jean, he dashed up the stairs and knocked loudly at the door of the first floor, where was his apartment.

Several times he knocked; and knocking, and listening attentively, he at last heard a grumbling voice and heavy foot-step approaching. He knocked again.

'Ah, knock! *scélérat*,' grumbled the voice. 'What can the *canaille* want now? They've taken madame and sealed up everything. If they come for me, so much the better.'

'Louison,' cried La Beauce, 'open for the love of Heaven!'

'*Mon Dieu!* Monsieur le Comte,' cried Louison; and so agitated was she that she fumbled at the lock till La Beauce was nigh distracted by the delay.

At last the door opened.

'Oh, monsieur has come at last,' sobbed Louison. 'Oh, why was he not here two days ago?'

'Speak, woman, for God's sake! Tell me, where is madame?'

'Ah, *mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*' cried Louison, wringing her hands.

At this moment Tamplin joined his friend. With a cool head he grasped the situation at once.

'Cease this noise, idiot!' he cried sternly, and none too soon he seized Louison by the arm, and dragged her into the apartment, where La Beauce and Jean, trembling with anxiety, followed

him. Already the lodgers on the other floors were showing signs of anxiety to know what new domiciliary visit was being made, and the locks of several doors were heard creaking!

'Now,' cried Tamplin, as he shut the door of the inner room, 'tell us everything thou knowest.'

Louison looked defiantly at this stranger.

'I refuse to speak,' she said, crossing her arms.

'Woman, would you drive me mad!' cried La Beauce.

'Where are Virginie and the boy? Why dost thou not speak? Seest thou not we are all friends?'

But Louison would not speak.

'Monsieur le Comte,' growled Jean, 'shall I shake her?'

Louison turned towards him.

'What! art thou Jean?' she cried.

'Who else?' growled Jean, seizing her roughly by the shoulder.

'Speak to monsieur, or I'll shake the life from thee!'

'Oh, *mon Dieu!* monsieur, two days ago they came and took away madame and Père Jacques in a coach with four gendarmes, and a scoundrel with an odious scarf on his dirty shoulder. For me, I had to bite my tongue to keep from letting them know what I thought of them; but I kept silent for the sake of little monsieur.'

'And where is he?' groaned La Beauce. 'Is he here?'

'Not so stupid, monsieur,' answered Louison. 'We hid him and Mademoiselle Célimène in Pierre's rooms on the fifth floor.'

'Thank God, he, at least, is safe!' cried La Beauce, and he started to his feet. 'Let me see him at once.'

'Not so fast,' answered Louison. 'Would monsieur compromise the boy? Monsieur must be very cautious or he will be suspected himself, and then who will help madame?'

'The woman is right,' said Tamplin, speaking for the first time. 'Thou must restrain thyself.'

'What!' cried the Comte with emotion, 'can I see neither wife nor child?'

'Even so,' said Tamplin quietly. 'Let us rest to-night, and to-morrow we will to Carnot to see what can be done.'

La Beauce glanced sadly round the room. All was kept neat and clean as before; only on each cupboard was the great sprawling seal of the Commune, with its tape across the lock, to prevent the contents being tampered with. Around were still the evidence of Virginie's presence. Here was her work-box, there

some books, principally of devotion, which she was not allowed to take with her. Going into the next room, in which she and Célimène slept, he found the simple articles of her toilette still on the dressing-table, the little cot in which his boy slept, and the bed used by the two women neatly prepared; all, in fact, ready for use. With a groan he threw himself on the bed and burst into tears.

Tamplin having gained all the information he could extract from Louison, which only amounted to this, that Pierre had heard that madame was taken to the prison of Les Carmes, dismissed her to her room, and coming in to La Beauce, laid his hand kindly on his shoulder, and said, 'I go to take some rest. Try thou to sleep. To-morrow we shall want all our wits and energies to settle this business. All shall yet be well.'

La Beauce took his friend's hand and pressed it, but he could say nothing, so Tamplin left him, and simply drawing off his boots, he threw himself on the couch in the sitting-room and was soon asleep. Fatigued by his long journey, unnerved by the dreadful discovery he made on his arrival, La Beauce himself sank into a troubled sleep, in which he dreamed he saw Virginie brought to the bar of the revolutionary tribunal, and sentenced to death. Then all her beautiful hair was cut off, and with her arms bound behind her, and her shoulders bare to the gaze of the infuriated populace, who shouted as she passed, he fancied he saw her in the *charrette* or tumbril, dragged to execution. He saw the guillotine ready for her; with unfaltering gait she ascended the steps. She cast a look round. Oh, should he ever forget the expression of her eyes? The executioner seized her—she was placed under the fatal blade—and then, with a cry, he woke. The dawn was fast breaking, and the objects in the room were dimly visible—all these things she had so recently used; was it possible she could be gone? In the next room the sound of the heavy breathing of friend Tamplin caught his ear. He looked in; Tamplin slept peacefully. With a sigh he returned, and once more throwing himself on his bed, was surprised when sleep overtook him, nor did he wake till Tamplin shook him, crying:

'Come, *mon Colonel*, it is time we were at work.'

With a start he leaped from the bed. It was nine o'clock on the 26th of July, Thermidor the 8th.

The two, having made their toilettes, started for the Ministry of War. There, having inquired for Carnot, they were bid to wait in an anteroom, as the Citoyen Minister had not arrived.

While waiting, more than one member of the Convention asked for Carnot, and hearing from the official on duty that he had not yet arrived, left, with many violent expressions of disappointment. At length, at half-past ten, Carnot appeared. There were several others besides La Beauce and Tamplin in the room, and these crowded round the Minister, and presented their petitions. Carnot heard what they had to say, and briefly answered each individual. Meanwhile the two friends kept discreetly in the background. When Carnot had finished with the others La Beauce advanced.

'Ah, already!' said Carnot, 'come with me,' and he led him into his room. At the door he cried to the usher: 'Citoyen Usher, see that no one interrupts me,' and shut the door. Advancing to his chair he sank into it with a wearied air. La Beauce and Tamplin stood at the other side of the official table.

'What is it thou wishest?' asked Carnot.

'Citoyen Minister,' said La Beauce, 'I have been summoned to Paris by the Minister's order.'

'That's true; let me see,' and he referred to some papers. 'Ah! here it is, the *affaire Pinard*.'

'Exactly, but it is not that alone that brings me here. When I joined the army the Citoyen Minister guaranteed the safety of my family, while I did my duty. Where is my wife, Citoyen Carnot?'

Carnot looked up with a quick look.

'What of Madame Chardon?' he asked.

'She was consigned to the prison of Les Carmes two days ago!'

Carnot leaped from his chair.

'What! Is this true?'

'Alas!'

'The *scélérats*!' he cried. 'Have they dared this? Ah! they think me without power! They insult me with impunity, do they?' and Carnot began marching backwards and forwards in his room speaking rapidly. 'It is not sufficient for them to make all France tremble before them. They would paralyse the army by this idiotic proscription. Ah, M. Robespierre! thou desirest to reign with thy Supreme Being, of whom thou wouldst be the High Priest, thou and thy pedant St. Just and thy mealy-mouthed, paralytic Couthon! See!' cried he, stopping before La Beauce. 'These last days the members of Convention have not dared to sleep in their own beds for fear of being arrested

during the night, for it is during the night that these men form their plans, unknown to their colleagues! I say, enough of this! I have thrown myself into the management of the details of my department and have allowed them to work their will. It is time this should change.'

At that moment there was a knock at the door, and the official usher entered.

'Citoyen Minister!' he said, 'the member of the Convention, Robert Lindet, demands an instant interview.' As he spoke, Lindet entered.

It so happened that in his anxiety to see Carnot, Lindet advanced so far into the room as to have his back towards La Beauce and Tamplin. As the usher withdrew, he eagerly cried:

'Carnot! It is time we should act. See thou this list, no matter how it was come by, it is in the handwriting of Robespierre. Forty members of the Convention are proscribed! All the prominent members of our party. See thy name amongst them. We must finish with these three. Sweep them away.' As he made a gesture of the arm, he caught sight of La Beauce and Tamplin. He stopped abruptly. 'Who are these men?' he asked nervously.

'I will answer for them. These two are from the army. I can trust them as I would trust myself,' said Carnot.

'Citoyen representative,' said Tamplin gravely, 'I am a Republican, none more so, but, in this matter, I am against these three to the death. And let me assure you two, I speak the general sentiments of the army from which I come.'

'I wish,' cried Lindet, 'we had a few thousand of the brave fellows with us now.'

'We shall have enough,' said Carnot, 'if we can only get them to declare themselves.'

'Let us lose no time then,' cried Lindet. 'I go to the Convention, where Robespierre must fall. The Marais must be gained. It has been seen to. Tallien and others are working at them. We shall meet soon at the Convention?'

'I will come at once.'

Lindet walked to the door—then he turned and approached Carnot.

'Art thou sure of these two?'

'Perfectly.'

'Have them then handy, there may be work in which they will be useful.' So saying, he hurried away.

Carnot sat down once more, and absently drummed with his fingers on the table. Then he looked up.

‘This Pinard business does not appear grave. Why didst thou let the man escape? He was sure to denounce. This affair is of course a pretext.’

‘We could hardly imagine such a man would be heard.’

‘Thou shouldst trust no one. I will see what is to be done. You two must not report yourselves officially till after this new affair is settled. Things cannot rest another day as they are; keep yourselves quiet. Do not go to the prison, it will be useless. Thou couldst not see madame, and thy presence may bring about thy arrest. Do you rather keep near the Convention, where I may have want of both. Follow me there now, but at a distance. Recollect there never was a police more alert than ours. The ruling three get to learn everything. I have no doubt that Citoyen Lafont, who is now outside the door, will report all my visitors to Robespierre this very day.’ Here Carnot rose and took his hat. Though he spoke with a smile, it was easy to see that he was full of anxiety. He descended from his apartment, and quickly made his way to the Convention, whither the two friends followed him at a discreet distance.

Only daring to speak when they could see no one overheard them, the two exchanged some confidences. It was settled that Jean, who would not be recognised, should be sent to the prison of Les Carmes, to try to get information as to Virginie, and, if possible, contrive she should know that her husband had returned to Paris. Pausing then by the Café de la Grande Nation, they despatched Jean to the prison, and themselves went to the Convention.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE CONVENTION.

THE Convention now sat in the Hall of the Tuileries instead of the Salle de Manège, for it had been decreed when the Royal Power was overthrown, that it became the dignity of the Convention, which took its place, to sit in the Palace itself. Thither, then, La Beauce and Tamplin repaired. Robespierre had for the last ten days abstained from appearing in his place at the Convention, nor had he attended at the Central Committees, but had contented himself with speaking at the Jacobins, where his power

was unquestioned. But this day it was announced he was to speak, consequently the crowd was very great. In the house itself there was a goodly attendance of members. The Mountain, or Left, was crowded—the Right had few members present, but as most of them had ‘paid the penalty of the law,’ the gaps on the benches could be well accounted for. It was noticed that the men of the ‘Plain’ (Marais) or Centre, were present in unusual numbers. It was noticed, too, that Tallien and others were in communication with them. All the galleries were packed to suffocation by the time Robespierre appeared. He was clad in the same sky-blue coat, with brass buttons, with nankeen trousers, he had worn at the *fête* of the Supreme Being. As he mounted the tribune there was silence through the hall. Then he began a long discourse, in which he defended himself and attacked the two Committees of Public Safety and of Surety. He talked much as usual of the happiness of the people, of his own virtue, and the prevalence of vice. He trembled to think that he himself might be calumniated. ‘But,’ said he, ‘I am consoled by the reflection that, if I have seen in history all the defenders of liberty calumniated, I have seen their oppressors die also! The good and the bad disappear alike from the earth, but in very different conditions. No, Chaumette! Death is not an eternal sleep! Citizens, efface from the tombs that maxim, engraven by sacrilegious hands, which would throw a funeral pall over Nature. Write rather, “Death is the commencement of immortality.”’

La Beauce seeing this man in the tribunal, yellow and sickly in complexion, his face without any power, his pointed, supercilious nose, and eyes weakly set in their sockets at an angle like a Chinaman’s, could not understand his power. This did not seem the man to command. This was not a ruler of men. Yet, when he turned to denunciation, the whole gall and venom of his nature appeared. There seemed the force of his nature. He threw by insinuating suspicion. His power rested on the dread of treachery and the confidence which his ‘incorruptibility’ inspired. Alas for Robespierre! The *fête* of the Supreme Being, which he had considered the masterpiece of his policy, was the ruin of his power. Already the tables were being turned. Suspicion was breathed on the incorruptible. How would he, who had so freely denounced, bear denunciation?

This speech was listened to in silence, and no applause followed its termination. As usual, however, it was proposed it should be printed and circulated in the provinces. Then, for the first time,

opposition appeared. This motion was agreed to as though from habit. But the members of the Committee who had been attacked recovered from their surprise. Cambon, Billaud de Varennes, Vadier, and others of the extreme party, turned on Robespierre, and the decree was reversed. La Beauce, watching the face of the terrible 'Incorruptible,' saw there an expression of surprise. But Robespierre yet smiled. To-morrow, he thought, he could succeed, and, as he hurried away to the Jacobins, he wore a look of triumph as though he had anticipated this resistance and was prepared for it!

Intensely interested in the proceedings, which he felt would decide the fate of Virginie and himself, La Beauce looked around for Carnot. Once he thought he saw him, but it was only for a moment, at the door of the hall, where he appeared but to look round and then leave.

In a state of the greatest disquietude La Beauce retired to his home, where he at last had the satisfaction of seeing Célimène and his son. Louison had managed to smuggle them into Jacques de Blanc's apartment unseen, and there the Comte found them. It was eighteen months since he had seen his boy. He was now more than four years old, and a bright, pretty lad, with his mother's large, dreamy eyes. Alas! the delight the father felt at seeing his son was sadly damped by thoughts of his wife. The boy himself constantly inquired after her. 'Why have they taken *petite mère* away?' he asked. 'Why are Céli and I living upstairs with Pierre? He is very good, Pierre, but I like my old Louison.' Here Louison seized the boy and covered him with kisses, but Petit Jacques extricated himself from her fervid embraces. 'Why, *petit père*?' he asked, and when La Beauce, with tears in his eyes, turned away, the little fellow embraced him. 'Céli says I must not talk of such things, but I may ask the *petit père*, because,' he added with pardonable confusion, 'I always pray to God for thee and poor Louis, and thou knowest everything. Why then?' asked the boy looking up eagerly in his father's face.

'My son,' said the Comte with emotion, 'there are many wicked men in power now, who put all who disagree with them in prison, and they have taken away thy grandfather and thy mother.'

'But they will come back,' cried the child. 'Thou art a soldier, and so is dear Jean, and you both will draw your swords

and kill these men, and bring me *petite mère* and *grand-père*, wilt thou not, *petit père* ?

‘My son, Jean and I will do our best.’

‘And where is dear Jean ?’ asked the boy.

‘I have sent him out, but he will be here soon.’

The sound of a heavy footstep here caused Petit Jacques to run to the door. It opened, and the figure of a soldier appeared, but ‘Petit Jacques’ drew back, for it was not Jean. The soldier, however, seized the little man with a loud laugh, raised him aloft, and, holding him at arm’s-length, looked at him with laughing eyes.

‘*Sacré !*’ cried Tamplin. ‘This is the little colonel I have heard so much of.’

‘Put me down !’ angrily shouted the boy.

‘*Diable !* What a voice to command a regiment !’ laughed Tamplin.

‘Céli,’ cried the boy, ‘tell him to put me down.’

Tamplin turned and caught sight of the pretty face of Célimène, blushing crimson ; he placed the boy on the ground, and stammered, ‘A thousand pardons, mademoiselle.’

Tamplin was the type of a *beau sabreur*, erect and strong. He stood about five feet ten in his stockings. He was dressed in the uniform of his regiment, which, of course, included the two meshes of plaited hair and the usual ‘pig tail,’ or hair dressed *en queue*. His sunburnt face told his character in the merry twinkle of his eyes and the rather set expression of his sarcastic lips. A shrewd man was Tamplin, full of spirits and good humour.

‘*Diable ! mon Colonel,*’ he cried, ‘I was unaware you had the company of ladies.’

‘Célimène, you have heard of my good friend Major Tamplin, as he has heard of my pretty cousin Célimène de la Rosière.’

The two bowed, and Célimène held out her pretty little hand. ‘Monsieur—I ask pardon—the Citoyen Major is already an old friend of mine. I have often heard of you through Etienne’s letters to Virginie.’

‘*Jarnidieu !*’ laughed Tamplin taking her hand and kissing it, ‘the *citoyenne* is charming, yet should she *tutoyer* her old friend. It sounds more friendly, and less like an aristocrat and spy of the terrible Monsieur Pitt.’

‘Thou at least wouldst be taken for a *sans-culotte* with thy oaths,’ laughed Célimène, who was ever ready with her tongue.

Tamplin blushed again. He was not used to the society of ladies.

‘Mademoiselle will excuse a rough soldier.’

‘Thou art the *aristo* now, with thy “mademoiselle,”’ cried Célimène.

Tamplin twisted his moustache and rattled out so considerable an oath that Célimène fled with pretended terror.

The advent of the Major tended to raise the spirits of the little family. It was impossible to feel despondent in his company. He cheered the melancholy of La Beauce, he reassured Célimène, and, in a few minutes, Petit Jacques was romping with him round the room, and making so much noise that Louison rushed in and sternly reproved Tamplin for his folly, which might, she said, compromise everyone.

‘It is true,’ cried Tamplin. ‘And in interrupting us thou showest more sense than I thought could be in thy wool-gathering head last night.’

‘Listen to the man!’ answered Louison, putting her arms akimbo and delighted to have an opportunity of loosing the tongue she had been obliged to keep under command so long. ‘Listen to the man! Sense, indeed! Turn up those ridiculous meshes of hair and put on a woman’s cap, and perchance thou might gain at least the look of wisdom thou lackest with thy *charivari* costume.’

‘Louison,’ cried the boy, ‘leave off, thou worriest me.’

‘That’s right,’ cried Tamplin, ‘always side with the weak.’

‘Weak!’ cried Louison. ‘Why art thou weak? thou and the thousands who wear great swords by their sides, yet allow a scum of cowards to imprison and guillotine their betters?’

‘The woman talks reason,’ cried Tamplin. Then, becoming grave, he added, ‘*Mon Colonel*, we must be serious, I have much of importance to tell thee.’

‘And Petit Jacques and I must retire to our den,’ added Célimène; ‘we have already been here too long.’

After an affectionate adieu, the boy was led away, to his infinite disgust. ‘You, and *petit père* and Jean, must draw your swords and bring *petite mère* back,’ were the last words he said.

‘The boy speaks the truth, and there seems some chance of our being able to do as he suggests,’ said Tamplin, when he and La Beauce were alone. ‘I have seen Carnot, and he and the others seem sanguine of success. Robespierre is very strong in

some of the sections. Happily, some of the most violent men are greatly against him. Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and the whole of the Committee will do all they can, while Carnot, Tallien, Lindet, and the more moderate men are trying to rouse the 'Moderates.' 'If only,' Carnot said, 'we could reassure the timid; if we can make them believe we are in earnest, the day will be ours. Alas! the majority of the people are so prostrated by terror that they are afraid to assert themselves. Anyhow, my friend, these men at least are in earnest. Their lives are at stake. We will strike with them for the sake of thy wife, and, if we fall, we shall not fall alone. To-morrow will be the great day. Courage, my friend!' and Tamplin held out his hand.

'Thou art a good friend,' murmured La Beauce, who was quite unnerved by the sight of his boy and the recollection of his wife in prison. Then, starting up, he cried: 'Have no fear, if I can only have a chance of striking these butchers of women. Liberty! What have they to do with liberty? Where is the Republic for which thou and I have fought? It is not that M. Robespierre and M. St. Just may denounce their enemies that we have defied the enemies of our country. Down with these tyrants!'

'And *Vive la République!*' added Tamplin.

'Yes, *Vive la République!*' cried La Beauce.

Much serious talk had the two friends that afternoon, nor had they finished their consultation when Jean appeared. He had had but small success at the prison. The 'cordon' of sentries around the building prevented any of those outside having any conversation with the prisoners within; but Jean, having treated one of the gaolers he had chanced to meet, had adroitly ascertained whereabouts the women prisoners were lodged, and wandering round that part of the building, and showing himself as much as the sentries permitted, he had had the satisfaction of seeing a handkerchief waved for a moment at one of the windows, and felt sure madame had seen him. 'The poor fellows on guard,' he said, 'would willingly have allowed me to break the cordon, but they told me, with tears in their eyes, that their lives depended on their observing their orders, and that spies were always ready to report the slightest neglect of duty. Ah, *mon Colonel,*' cried Jean, and his face grew stern as he spoke, 'give me a chance of striking these men, and my hand shall not fail me.'

'Be content, Jean,' said Tamplin; 'thou shalt have a chance, and that before long.'

During the evening Jean stole upstairs with Pierre, whom he chanced to meet, to see Petit Jacques, and as he felt his little arms round his rough neck, he sobbed so grievously that the boy cried, 'Jean, what ails you?' but Jean tenderly stroked the boy's face and gazed in his eyes unable to speak. He was thinking of his own little son.

(To be continued.)

The Battle of the Eggs.

THE history of life, as Science relates it, has had many a rallying point at which silent but deadly strife has been waged during those long ages which

Have clasped the limits of mortality

for many a type and species; but the struggle which of all others has been most persistent and fiercely fought, and which has from the beginning taxed the resources of life to the utmost, has been what may not inaptly be described as the Battle of the Eggs. It has left its mark deep and lasting on the whole animal world.

The philosophers of the old days had a theory that every living thing had its origin in an egg. Modern Science has laid rude hands on many of the theories of these worthy gentlemen, but this one she has left on its pedestal to invest it with a meaning and significance which its authors never dreamt of.

What is an Egg? Many of us who break the shell of our matutinal new-laid may feel inclined to object to have such a precise question poked at us. Of course we know very well in a general way what an egg is, and beyond this why not leave the making of scientific definitions in the hands of those gentlemen who devote their whole time to it? Nevertheless, the question is not an unimportant one, for at first sight Nature would seem to have played strange freaks with the eggs of her creatures. The egg of an insect is a speck of matter differing in many important particulars from the eggs of animals higher in the scale of life. The egg of a bird, with its yolk and white inclosed in a shell, is familiar to all. The egg of a mammal, a higher order of creature, is a microscopic unit of matter, which as regards size bears a scarcely measurable relation to the huge creature which it is destined to produce, and in which as regards structure our idea of the bird's egg is altogether lost.

When a spell of east wind towards the end of March has been followed by a mild rainy day, one may notice floating in many of the ponds and ditches large masses of a transparent jelly-like substance, which, being nearly the same weight as the surrounding water, float almost wholly immersed, and generally entangled in the neighbouring weeds. If a portion of this jelly be carefully removed and examined, it will be found to consist of albuminous matter of the appearance and consistency of white of egg, and scattered throughout it at regular intervals from each other there will be noticed round dark bodies much resembling in appearance small grains of shot. A closer inspection will reveal that, although the whole adheres together in a mass, the dark grains are in a sense cut off from each other, each being surrounded with its own sphere of albuminous matter. These masses of jelly are the spawn deposited by the common frog at this time of the year, the female—like the representatives of all other orders of animals which have been left hopelessly behind in the race of life—leaving her offspring to the tender mercies of circumstances at the earliest possible stage at which she can get rid of them.

The most essential part of one of those newly deposited eggs would escape notice. In the eggs of all animals the centre of life is an infinitesimally small nucleus of active living protoplasm. In the frog's egg this nucleus is surrounded with a large quantity of food material, which makes up the dark-brown grain already referred to, the albuminous coat containing a further reserve of food, intended to be drawn upon at a later stage; the whole, it will be observed, exactly corresponding in the arrangement of parts to the egg of a fowl. Before proceeding to notice in what way the development of the young tadpole has been effected by the great struggle referred to, and the better to realise the nature of the vital forces now about to commence to work in the egg, it will be well to take a glance aside for a moment.

In this drop of water under the microscope we have got a peculiar animal. Look well and long, for we have here a notable object, a being of mystery, of which Science has heard and said much, but of which she knows little—the creature which her enemies irreverently say she will one day, when she has worn out her brains, fall down and worship. The view at first does not present anything very striking—an infinitely small particle (for we are using a high power) of viscid-looking, semi-transparent

matter, granular in appearance. It moves as you look, stretching out of its substance finger-like processes, which are again withdrawn. It changes form and position rapidly. A closer inspection shows patches of water and foreign-looking organic substances engulfed in the mass; but there are no organs of any kind, and there is no differentiation of structure. The searching or feeling movements of the processes have a significantly purposive effect, and that the whole is the seat of life one is convinced beyond a doubt. Even as you look you are conscious of a peculiar indescribable feeling, which on analysis is found to arise from the attempt unconsciously made to localise a purpose in such a structureless unit of matter. Some of the organic bodies entangled may be identified with one or more of the smaller swimming forms of life with which the water abounds, and their presence gives a clue to the uncanny movements. The animal feeds, and, although it has no mouth, you may, if you watch closely, see it eat its fellow-creatures; the unsuspecting prey which venture within reach being most literally taken in, the viscid mass flowing round it and engulfing it bodily. It eats and grows, but it does not exactly bring forth after its kind. After a course of feeding, more or less prolonged, a furrow begins to extend round the body, dividing it into two portions of about equal size, which become pinched apart and soon separate. The creature, in fact, transports itself bodily into the next generation, each part commencing an independent existence and repeating the life-history of the parent.

The object at which we have been looking is a representative of one of the *amœba* forms which may generally be found in numbers around decaying vegetable matter in stagnant water, or in the moist earth off which such water has evaporated. These animals present one of the simplest types of creatures whose bodies consist of but a single cell; and they have a significant position, inasmuch as they possess all the characteristics of the essential speck of protoplasm from which all animal life commences, however highly differentiated afterwards.

We have seen that the *amœba* feeds by taking organic matter into its substance, where it is gradually assimilated by the protoplasm of the cell, the cell itself dividing into two after it has reached a certain size. The development of the frog's egg commences by the nucleus behaving in exactly the same way as the *amœba*; the frog's egg at first is, in fact, the simple cell of which we have been speaking, but gorged by a huge store of

food material, the significance of which we shall presently see.

The first act in the development of the frog's egg is strikingly suggestive of the amoeba. A few hours after the egg is deposited the nucleus of protoplasm divides into two, and the portions travel apart, dividing their inheritance of food material between them, the separation being marked by a furrow which, under a low power of the microscope, may presently be seen to extend round the egg. The process is essentially the same as that of the division of the amoeba, except that the parts of the egg do not swim asunder but still remain attached to each other. In the next act the two nuclei again divide, and a furrow may be seen extending round the egg at right angles to the first, dividing it now into four parts; and so the segmentation continues, the nuclei ever dividing, and until the food matter is exhausted giving rise to the cells which build up the body of the developing embryo.

It is this food matter, present in such large quantities in the egg of the frog, which has played so great a part in the Battle of the Eggs and the history of life. Nothing in the course of evolution has had more fateful consequences for species and races than the nature of the parental endowment of the young germ about to commence a separate existence. The unworthy instinct—denounced of socialism—which prompts us to endeavour to give our own offspring a better start in the race of life than our neighbour's, is not peculiar to these degenerate days or a discovery of the French Revolution. It has been the battle-ground of genera and species while nations and politicians were still silent in the womb of the future. About the equipment of the speck of matter in which individual life commences, a great struggle has centred from the beginning. The frog's egg consists, as we have seen, of a central grain corresponding to the yolk in a bird's egg, from which the body of the young tadpole is built up; while outside this there is in the albuminous envelope a further supply of food to be drawn upon and digested in the ordinary way by the young animal after its development has reached a more advanced stage. Now in the lower forms of life, the egg is provided with but a scant supply of food for the development of the young, which consequently quits the egg at a very early stage, and, receiving no parental care, has almost from the first to provide itself with food and look after its own safety. As the higher forms of life were evolved, we may see how the

Battle of the Eggs began to shape itself. As (for reasons to which we shall presently refer) the law of life is, and ever has been, that all individual life starts from the single cell—a single speck of undifferentiated protoplasm—so as the higher forms were developed the distance from this point to the complex adult individual became even greater and greater, and more and more difficult to cover in the space of a single precarious lifetime. There was now one direct way above all others in which success in the fierce competition of life tended to be assured. Those organisms which acquired the power of placing their offspring in conditions to enable them to reach a comparatively advanced stage of development before having to provide for themselves, acquired an immense advantage over all others.

In the case of the frog a considerable advance has been made. A large quantity of food is provided for the young tadpole in the egg, so that it is enabled to reach a certain development securely and rapidly before having to expend energy in providing for itself. Nevertheless, the frog in the character of a parent is the most conspicuous failure among the vertebrates, the tadpole leaving the egg at a less advanced stage than the young of any other creature amongst them. Like Jean Jacques Rousseau, moreover, the frog is not troubled by paternal qualms, for he persists in the fatal practice, commended of the French philosopher, of leaving his offspring to be brought up by the community. After the stream of life has come down through the order to which the frog belongs (batrachians) and has branched off through the reptiles and birds, on the one hand, and the mammals on the other, the conflict grows in intensity.

Amongst the birds the effort to provide the fullest possible endowment of the young in the egg has reached an advanced stage. The culminating point is, in fact, attained in the grand effort which has taxed the resources of all the earlier forms of life. The egg of the bird is but the frog's egg with the store of food material enormously increased, and, to all the advantage to the young creature of being hatched out at a later period of development, there is now added the watchful care of the parent for long after. The resources of Nature could scarcely go further in this direction; any further advance had to be made along a different line.

In the troublous times of the fierce predecessors of the mammalia the burning question of the day must have been the great egg question. These ungentle denizens of the primeval marshes,

whose wont it was to tear each other in their slime, must have had a very vivid practical experience of the inconvenience, not to say danger, to the next generation of the system hitherto in vogue of hatching out their eggs after they had been laid. The great problem of the time was how to devise some plan by which the eggs might be hatched out *before* they were laid, and by which, consequently, the developing young would in the meantime be withdrawn altogether from the risks of a separate existence. The future belonged to those who could find a solution to this riddle of the times, and the ancestors of the mammals proved equal to the occasion. Hence it came that the egg was no longer deposited by the parent to be hatched out afterwards by the heat of its body. Under the new arrangement its character was slowly revolutionised. It soon became unnecessary to supply the young germ at the commencement with the huge store of food material which we find packed around it in the egg of a bird, for the young during development began, as they were now able to do, to draw their supply direct from the mother. The egg, in fact, at length assumed in the mammals the character to which we referred at the commencement—viz. that of the single speck of protoplasm, which forms the essential part of all eggs, without the food material with which we find it surrounded in such vast quantities in the eggs of lower orders of animals.

The immediate ancestors of the mammals had made a great advance, but the Battle of the Eggs continued to be waged with unabated vigour. The rivalry for the highest equipment of the young had assumed a new phase. The mammals next struck out a bold and successful experiment which placed them well in the van of progress, when they evolved the plan of lifting the young over a long and helpless period by supplying them with milk after they were born; and in other directions they continued the progress already made, the young reaching a stage of development before being born, becoming more and more advanced as we rise from the marsupials to the placentals. The far-reaching effects of the deepening of the parental feelings, which grew apace, we shall presently have occasion to notice.

The history of progress in biology is closely identified with the greatest struggle of animal life—that which is centred round the young. For the species the highest equipment of the next generation has ever been the shortest and surest road to success in the struggle for existence, and the supreme rivalry ever to place the young in a more and more advantageous position to

undertake the responsibilities of life on its own account has decided the fate of many an order and species. It will have been seen that the long-sustained effort in animal life, of which we have been speaking, had its origin in two conditions. The first was the fact that amongst the animals the type towards which all progress tended was necessarily the individual of high and complex organisation; the second was the inexorable law which, despite this, ever compelled Nature to return for every new life to the original starting point of a single cell of protoplasm. With the interval between these two points, which had to be travelled in every lifetime, gradually growing wider and more difficult to cover unaided, the care of the young inevitably assumed an immense importance. It is therefore very interesting to note the altogether different lines upon which the Battle of the Eggs has been fought out elsewhere in life where one of these two conditions has been absent.

In the vegetable world the same strange law has also been laid upon Nature by which she has ever periodically to return for the new life to a single cell of protoplasm. But the other condition is wanting. Amongst the plants the heir of the ages whom all things work together to evolve is not the individual of high organisation. From their habits the plants have of necessity remained from the beginning mere stationary accumulations of cells without complex organisation. Consequently there has not been that effort to bridge in every lifetime a gradually widening interval between the egg and the adult individual which we found amongst the animals, and which was productive of such far-reaching consequences to the young. The Battle of the Eggs has, therefore, taken an altogether different direction amongst the plants, but it has been waged just as fiercely.

We may consider the seed amongst the plants as exactly representing the egg in the animals; it has its origin in the same way, and the essential part of it is the single cell of active living protoplasm which has accumulated round it a store of food material larger or smaller according to circumstances. In most seeds the young germ has made considerable development before it leaves the parent and begins to germinate. The food material in the seed is, however, intended to supply the needs of the developing germ only during the short interval before it strikes root and begins to draw nourishment from the soil. It is, therefore, small in quantity, and it has played no great rôle in the history of life, for the plant is soon independent of it and of all further

help from the parent. The Battle of the Eggs has, therefore, been fought within narrow lines. Once the young germ is rooted in a favourable position, the highest aim of parentage amongst the plants has been successfully accomplished. In the vegetable world, the power of locomotion being absent, the one law which from the beginning has been set before the organism which would leave its seed to inherit the earth is that the seed must be enabled itself to go forth and take possession of it. The effort to equip the seed accordingly has evoked the keenest competition, and the strangest devices and most ingenious arrangements have been evolved by the plants to enable them to hold their own in the rivalry.

Here, on Chislehurst Common, towards the end of autumn, the golden bloom of the furze has disappeared, and has been replaced by a wealth of seed-pods, which show their rusty brown among the dark spines. The morning has been close and cloudy, but just now the sun shines out warm and strong, bringing out a burst of insect sound to which the bees at work amongst the belated heather blooms contribute no small share. There is one sound amongst the others which, if observant, one will have noticed as having also come with the sunshine. It is a peculiar crackling noise, which sounds exactly like the first rustle of flame among the dry grass or spines. Instinctively the eye seeks the furze some yards away; but the bushes do not show any signs of catching fire, and neither here nor elsewhere is there any explanation apparent of the faint but continuous crackling which goes on all round. Presently you feel as if you had been struck with some force by a small object, and a dark flinty-looking grain rebounds from your face on to the book which you are reading. What is it, and where does it come from? It is the seed of the furze, and it must have been shot a considerable distance, for the nearest bushes are several yards off. The furze is utilising the hot sunshine in that silent rivalry ever going on around us, to which we owe all progress and beauty. It is annexing fresh territory; it is scoring a point in the Battle of the Eggs.

If a ripe seed capsule of the furze be examined it will be found to much resemble both in form and appearance an ordinary pea pod. In damp or cloudy weather, and before the seeds are ripe, the valves of the pod inclose the seeds loosely. As the latter become ripe, however, and turn dark in colour, the valves harden and shrink and assume a state of tension which, as the sun shines on them, becomes very great. At last the pod bursts open with a slight explosion, in which it is itself sometimes rent away, shooting the

hard seeds at the same time often to a long distance. This is the cause of the crackling noise.

Great is the ingenuity which the plants have displayed over the germ which is sent abroad with a roving commission to reproduce the species. It is fitted to retain its vitality for long periods; it is meant to take advantage of currents of water or to be carried about by the wind. In some cases, as amongst the algæ or sea-weeds, it even provides its own means of locomotion, and swims actively abroad, by means of cilia, before coming to rest to germinate. Among the higher orders of plants the end in view is still the same. An immense number of our herbs, shrubs, and trees imitate the furze in providing ingenious devices for sending their seeds abroad. It is evident that even the capacity to get away a short distance gives the species, in favourable circumstances, an unlimited capacity for travel in the course of generations. The vetches, the broom, and many other plants throw their seed like the furze; but others, especially those which bear them at a considerable height from the ground, provide them with wings, the ash, sycamore, birch, pine, elm, maple, and lime being familiar examples amongst the trees. Others, again, which have special ends in view or which require special habitats, like the willow, cotton-grass, thistle, dandelion, and bulrush, send their seeds far afield, and, not content with ordinary means, provide them with long feathery tufts of hair, through the agency of which, on the wings of the wind, they go to seek their fortune as

feathered reed seeds fly
O'er rock and loam and sand, until they find
Their marsh and multiply.

Providing the seed in these ways with means to travel some distance was, however, the best plan only till a better one was evolved. A distinct advance was made by the plants when they began to utilise the animals to carry their seeds abroad. The burdocks, cleavers, and forget-me-nots, whose habits lent themselves to it, provided their seeds with hooks, by which they were able to lay hold of the woolly coats of animals, and so get carried away and dispersed by the unwilling hosts. But the brilliant stroke, to which we owe all our bright-coloured, edible fruits, was to bribe the animals to do the service unconsciously. Hence we have the stone fruits, such as the plums, peaches, and cherries, and the sloes and haws of our hedges, whose sole object in existence is to offer the reward of the bright-coloured, edible pulp

in return for the service done to the plant in plucking and distributing the seed contained in the stone. The blackberry and raspberry and the currant and gooseberry exist for the same purpose, each providing hard, indigestible seeds contained in a sweet, juicy pulp. The apple and pear are members of a group in which the seeds are soft; but the device of the plants in this case is to surround them with a hard, stringy core which no sensible animal would eat. The orange, with its bitter seeds, is a representative of another class which attains the same end in a different way. The object in view is always the same, and the rivalry to attain it is carried to the highest pitch, the plants setting themselves to cater to every weakness of bird and beast in order to utilise them the while as the unconscious vehicles for the great purpose of the dispersion of the seeds.

It will be observed that whilst among the animals the highest endowment of the young and prolonged parental solicitude for their welfare has been the goal of a supreme struggle, the highest aim amongst the plants, on the other hand, has merely been to send their offspring out of their own immediate neighbourhood. The Battle of the Eggs, although it has been hotly waged everywhere in life, has made its effects felt least at the bottom of the scale. The universal law which compels nature to periodically return to a single cell of protoplasm for the new life, begins to constitute an ever-growing tax upon the resources of life as progress is made towards a more complex organisation. The lower types of life feel it little, the plants much less severely than the animals; upon the higher mammals it presses with a weight which ever grows more crushing as progress continues. What, then, is the significance of this onerous law by which Nature seeks to start all her creatures high and low at scratch, and which she necessarily enforces at such stupendous cost to the higher forms of life which have to travel farthest to the goal?

Now, at the beginning of such an inquiry we are met by the fact that there would certainly appear to be no absolute necessity in the order of things which would compel Nature always to begin the new life from a single cell. There are, on the contrary, many instances to hand of a readier method which might be followed if she had not some deep purpose in view in proceeding in the way she does. In the vegetable world, for instance, we are confronted with a host of familiar examples in which, although the ordinary method of reproduction is from the single cell which develops into the seed, other more direct methods are also available,

although they are evidently not intended to be resorted to in the usual course. Many examples might be quoted of the higher seed-bearing plants which can produce new individuals from detached parts, and even among the lower forms of animal life a corresponding faculty is not altogether wanting. Nature must, therefore, be carrying out some well-laid scheme in persistently setting her face against other methods of multiplying life, and establishing almost from the beginning that costly law of reproduction from the single cell which weighs so heavily upon the higher forms. Let us see what clue we get from observing the methods of reproduction among the earlier forms of life.

We find the simplest example of reproduction amongst those forms of plants and animals which consist of but a single cell. Among the plants, for instance, the yeast cell in its rapid career multiplies by a simple process of budding, the parent cells giving rise to new individuals which reach their full size before becoming detached. Again, in almost any drop of water the simplest form of animal reproduction may be watched. The single-celled infusorian, whom we find in such numbers and of so many kinds in all water containing organic matter which has been exposed to the air, knows few of the cares of parenthood. To-day he eats and drinks and makes merry in his tiny world, and to-morrow he divides, like the *amœba*, living again in his offspring, not by poetic licence, but in actual fact. Although these single-celled creatures often attain to considerable differentiation of parts, being equipped in some species with cilia for purposes of locomotion, and a mouth and excreting apparatus for taking in food and getting rid of waste material at particular parts of the cell wall, this method of reproduction by fission or simple division is universal. Here, as everywhere else throughout life, the simple cell, like the silent member, seems to be swayed by one commanding impulse—'divide, divide.'

Now when we rise beyond the single-celled organisms we are at once confronted with an interesting change in the method of reproduction. In the lower forms of multicellular plants, reproduction might in some respects be taken to bear a close analogy to what we find it in the beginning. Any detached portion of the parent may grow into a new individual. The mosses present a familiar example of this democratic tendency. In a community of moss plants, not only each plant but each part of a plant seems to be as good as another; for every part, a portion of the stem or even of a leaf may in suitable conditions develop

into a new individual. But already, even among the mosses, we may notice that Nature has set her face against this simple method of reproduction. We find her returning periodically, when possible, to the single cell for the new life, and resorting, in doing so, to certain curious and elaborate arrangements.

We have only now to rise a step further to find the design, which we guessed at but darkly amongst the mosses, worked out on a gigantic scale. Amongst the flowering plants what universal purpose is this upon which we find Nature bent? Here the propagation of the species by means of the seed has become the universal rule; and this method of reproduction, be it observed, has not been resorted to because the simpler one is no longer available, for many even of the higher flowering plants still retain in full vigour the power of giving rise to new individuals from detached parts. The familiar geranium is but an example of a multitude of flowering plants amongst which a cutting is ever ready to leave the parental stem and strike its root as an independent freeholder of the soil. The potato may be instanced as a representative of another class where specialised roots may at any time take upon themselves the duty of linking the generations together, although Nature's plan of propagation is from the seed. One of our buttercups furnishes a still better example of the resources of this kind which Nature might have developed if she had chosen. Her intention evidently is that the plant shall reproduce itself from the seed, but it may also produce new individuals from specialised roots like the potato, or, in case of necessity, the little buds born in the axils of the leaves can carry on the fortunes of the species; for they may fall off, strike root vigorously, and grow into new plants.

It is by watching her in the production of flowers that we get some inkling of what Nature is driving at. These obviously have a definite relation to the seed. Beautiful objects of her handiwork as they are, she has in their production evidently not laid the higher forms of vegetable life under such severe contribution simply to delight our æsthetic tastes or inspire the poet's periods. Nature is too much given to minding her own business to work for such wages. The flowers are to her objects of the strictest utility, whose beauty is but the measure of the utilitarian motive which prompted their production. The great object for which a flower exists is now known to be to insure the fertilisation of the seed. It has been one of the most interesting of the recent exploits of science to work out and explain how this object

is attained, and that chapter of natural history which deals with the relations of flowers to insects and other agents of fertilisation will continue to be one of the most fascinating which science has ever produced. Every part of the flower so wonderfully and beautifully contrived has its purpose, every property—colour, fragrance, markings, shape—has its part to play in furthering the fertilisation of the seed, for which sole end every variety of flower which has adorned the earth (excluding always the perversions of the market gardeners) has been brought into existence.

The great purpose towards which Nature has almost from the beginning been working among the plants is, then, no other than the fertilisation of the seed, and the propagation of the species by the seed so fertilised. Here we are at last in sight of the explanation of the law of the periodical return to the single cell for the new life. It is the necessity of fertilisation which compels Nature to start from this point. Stripped of all technicalities, the fertilisation of the ovule contained in the flower consists essentially in the fusion of part of the protoplasm of one of its cells with the protoplasm of a pollen grain from, if possible, another flower, the most surpassingly delicate arrangements being evolved to effect this fusion. It is the single cell resulting which is the starting-point of the new life which is sent forth in the seed. This cell has its counterpart in the eggs of the animals. The nucleus in the fertilised egg of the frog has had a similar origin to that of the cell from which the new plant is derived, fertilisation securing that the protoplasm of which it is formed shall also have been taken from two distinct individuals. This is the point, therefore, to which Nature has almost from the beginning sought to return for the new life. The unit from which she starts has everywhere the same significance.

In seeking in fertilisation the cause of that costly law of reproduction which compels Nature to periodically return to a single cell for individual life, we are brought face to face with the great biological question of the day, of which the air is now so full, viz. the origin and cause of sex. To discuss this question at length would probably carry us further than it would be convenient to travel within the limits of an article of this kind. That some tremendous utility lay at the root of sexual reproduction, science has long suspected; but it is only recently that the researches of Weismann and others have led to the formulation of theories in connection with the subject which Mr. Alfred Russel

Wallace has recently described as the most important contribution to the evolution theory since the appearance of Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' Nature's great object in starting each life from a single cell formed by the fusion of protoplasm taken from two distinct individuals, is that the hereditary tendencies of both parents shall be combined in the new individual. Sexual reproduction is, in fact, a stupendous organisation by which, in the course of generations, Nature is continually mixing together and forming new combinations of the hereditary qualities of a whole species. No two individuals, consequently, ever have been or ever will be exactly alike. Weismann's view is that the object of sex is the production of those small variations between individuals upon which the whole fabric of Darwinism rests. For if there had been no variations we should have been all equally fit, there would have been no fitter, and consequently no law of Natural Selection making for progress in securing the Survival of the Fittest. Without sex there could, in fact, have been no progress; and Nature could never have evolved the higher forms of life. How far this will prove to be the full explanation of sex remains to be seen; but we may assume without question, from the efforts which Nature has made to maintain sex, that it must have had some such gigantic utility in the evolution of life.

We have seen, therefore, what deep-seated laws have shaped the course of the Battle of the Eggs. The burthen of it presses ever heavier upon the higher forms of life, and it will not cease to be waged while progress continues. We have seen how the ancestors of the mammals came to the front by their solution of the egg problem, and how the early mammals increased the advantage by the provision made for the young after birth. Since then the rivalry has centred round the care of the young at a later stage. The parental feelings grow deeper and stronger and begin to reach a great development among the higher mammals, culminating at length significantly in the Primates, where, through the enormous lengthening out of the period of parental care, the social instincts have had their origin and the foundations were laid of a new era of progress.

Amongst ourselves the advancing tide still sets steadily in the direction of the highest care of the young, for progress is still towards the more complex individual, nowadays indeed more so than ever, when the highest organisation is mental rather than physical. Accordingly, amongst the more advanced races the period of infancy continues to be lengthened out as the point

which Nature has to reach in the perfected adult individual becomes ever more distant from that to which she has to return for every new life. The burthen of parenthood accordingly grows ever heavier amongst us. But as it does so, so also does the duty of bearing it efficiently become the more imperative. The rivalry is, in fact, ever to do so as well as possible at the penalty of being pushed aside by those races and individuals who will do it more worthily. Nowadays the lord of creation, in his philosophical moods, is wont to plume himself on his position, and flatter himself that, since he has developed his intellect and invented school boards and parliamentary government, he has shaken himself free from the laws which have governed creation before his time. But no: the mills of God still grind slowly, and his destiny is shaped as surely as at the beginning by the working of those stupendous laws deep-seated as life itself.

BENJAMIN KIDD.

Wine Facts and Fables.

IF there be one subject more than another which develops the latent mendacity of male human nature, that subject—when it's not angling—is certainly wine. The effect of wine upon the imagination is not dependent upon the mere drinking of it; it seems to be sufficient that a man talk about it, buy it, sell it, possess it—if it be but a single bottle of Castle A from the grocer's round the corner—to convert him at once from the simple humdrum habit of truth-telling to a disregard of the veracities as magnificent as if he were a professional framer of joint-stock company prospectuses.

It is extraordinary how much every man knows about wine by nature's light alone. Your host may have cultivated his taste upon gin and small beer for the first forty years of his life, but when he has made his fortune and formed his cellar no expert can teach him anything that he does not know about vintages, *crûs*, bouquet. Here and there in the world one may meet with an exceptional individual who will confess himself no judge of horse flesh; another, maybe, whom the admission that he never fired off a gun in his life does not cover with confusion as with a garment; but he who will unblushingly admit that he is not endowed by nature with a nice and discriminating palate for wine is little short of a *lusus natura*.

The universality of this curious gift probably accounts for the existence in the world of so many wine merchants. It sustains a man who is travelling on the down grade by the reflection that when everything else fails he has always, providentially, one last resource—he can always go into the wine trade, and, having the courage of his convictions, he always does, to the serious discomposure of the few friends who may still be left to him.

This correlation of wine and the cultivation of the imaginative faculty seems never to have had full justice done to it by writers on the subject, if, possibly, one may except Dr. Arnaud of Bordeaux,

who, once upon a time, wrote a lengthy treatise to prove the influence of viticulture upon the development of modern thought. Henri Quatre, Richelieu, Louis Quatorze, according to the Doctor, did greater work than they dreamed of when they encouraged the cultivation of the vine. *Vivere fortes ante Agamemnona*. There were, we know, strong wines vintaged in Champagne before Dom Perignon of Ste. Menéhould, and mighty drinkers before the Regent d'Orléans, for has not Wenceslaus II., Emperor of Germany, who visited Charles VI. at Rheims in the year 1398, come down to posterity as the monarch who looked upon the wine of the mountain when it was red with a steadiness of regard that proved utterly subversive of the imperial dignity? Still, this was comparatively a barbaric liquor. In the days of the fourteenth Louis more wine and finer was produced. Then taverns multiplied, and men of culture and taste frequented them; they talked about wine, and drank it—a good deal of it. Bright wits grew brighter under its influence, and sharper by contact with each other; so there was evolved a brilliant constellation of talent of which Corneille, Molière, La Fontaine, Pascal, Racine, Bossuet and Fénelon were the bright particular stars. Then came, in due course, Louis XV., and coffee came in with him, and coffee left its mark upon the spirit of the age. The coffee-grounds are, to the eagle eye of Dr. Arnaud of Bordeaux, directly discernible in the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Grimm, Beaumarchais, and Frederick of Prussia. 'To a literature full of warmth, vigour, and conviction,' he says, 'succeeded one that was polished but cold; witty, but without sign of true genius; philosophical, but without religious vitality; mocking, but uninformed by that spirit of lofty and wise criticism which attacks and overthrows vice.'

So many hard things have been lately written and said about the cup which cheers and, on occasions, inebriates, that it is positively refreshing to turn to the forgotten page of a writer like Dr. Arnaud, of such robust and Panurge-like faith in the virtue of good liquor, that he holds that 'lofty and wise criticism' can be cultivated only upon choice vintages. It induces speculation as to the extent to which the principles of the United Kingdom Alliance have been embraced by the gentlemen who write upon art, literature and the drama in the daily papers.

That reign of Louis XIV., to which he refers, was marked by an event which should be reverently regarded as a landmark in the history of the modern world. It was in the year 1688 that

Dom Perignon, a pious monk, and wise beyond his contemporaries, entered upon the important post of cellarer to a fraternity of monks of the Order of St. Benedict in the hamlet of Hautvillers, situate on the Marne, about fifteen miles from Rheims and four or five from Epernay. Much depended upon the cellarer, for the revenues of the Abbey were drawn solely from its vineyards, and upon the taste and judgment of him who manipulated their produce the prosperity of the Order rested. Now Dom Perignon, so 'twas said, was a heaven-born cellarer. Consider what he did. He invented corks! Before his time men had been content to stuff handfuls of flax soaked in oil into the necks of their bottles when they wanted to stop them. Then he found that the wine which came into his hands, being produced from different grapes grown in different situations and under different conditions, showed, as might reasonably be supposed, different characteristics. A little was good, a little was bad, and a great deal was indifferent, and the brilliant idea suggested itself to him of marrying the produce of one vineyard with others until he obtained a mixture entirely satisfactory to his fastidious taste; so was Dom Perignon the first blender of wines whereof the world has cognisance. He has had many imitators in later days, even more artistic manipulators, who have married grape juice to the spirit distilled from the humble potato or the useful mineral oil, to their own advantage and the discomfort of the world at large; but Dom Perignon was honest, and his taste was unimpeachable.

These discoveries of his were the result of thought and judgment. His greatest, for which posterity gives him most credit, was arrived at by accident. A closely corked bottle exploded, and lo! to an expectant world the mystery of effervescence was revealed, and *vin mousseux*—what we call champagne—was the result.

Nobody, not even the pious cellarer himself, knew why the wine effervesced. He had a fine palate and a sound judgment, and knew how to take advantage of his discovery, but he was no chemist, he, and the connection between sugar and carbonic acid was not dreamed of in his philosophy. It was, so the wiseacres said, because of the age of the moon, or the season of the year when the wine was bottled, or because of the addition of spirit, of alum, or all sorts of nastinesses. So when Perignon was no more they set to work to improve upon his processes, and drugged their wine to such an extent that gastric disturbances ensued and people got disgusted, and for a while *vin mousseux* fell into disrepute,

But that was not to be yet. When the first bottles of the new wine reached the outer world, the days of the great king were drawing to a close. Marlbrook had gone to war with a vengeance, and the glory of France had been tarnished in the field. The once brilliant court was a sad place now, and the gay young lover of La Vallière was an enfeebled old dotard who passed his last days gloomily under the religious dispensation of Scarron's widow. It may be that when the bright wine of the good monk Perignon creamed and bubbled in his glass Louis felt himself for the nonce a king again, and owed to its influence the few bright generous flashes that illumined the last dark days of his existence. Possibly Madame de Maintenon sipped it too, and on occasions abated her natural austerity in consequence. It was certainly a drink high in favour with the gay young roisterers—the future *roués* of the Regency—who paid court to the rising sun of Orleans.

It was at one famous supper at Anet that the Marquis de Sillery, whose title is immortal, though of himself little memory remains, introduced a train of a dozen fair damsels clad as Bacchantes, in somewhat scanty flowing robes, each of whom bore in her hand a flower-wreathed bottle of the noble liquor henceforth to be known as Sillery.

Champagne was dear then, for the price of the wine bottled by Dom Perignon was not less than ten pounds per hundred bottles, a truly alarming figure two centuries ago, and a respectable one even now if the relative value of money be considered.

It was not the Marquis of that name, after all, who made the prosperity of Sillery, but a woman. It is curious what a great deal women have had to do with champagne. The Maréchale D'Estrées was a *grande dame de par le monde*; also was she an excellent woman of business, in right of birth, for she was the daughter of a Jew financier. She had vineyards at Mailly, Verzy, Verzenay, and Sillery, but she united the produce of them all under the one name Sillery. Her methods were, perhaps, less picturesque than those of the Marquis, but on the whole better considered, for she bestowed special pains upon the cultivation of her vineyards, and having a good wine to sell, used her social position unsparingly to force it down the throats of her contemporaries.

The popularity of Sillery appears to have been the beginning of that worship of brands which is so characteristic of the modern wine drinker. The vineyards in the Champagne department cover 138,870 English acres, which produce about fourteen million

gallons of wine annually, of which about one-third is sparkling wine. It seems improbable that there should be so wide a range in the value of the wines of the district as is represented by the difference in price between a brand of fashionable repute and one less well known. The value of a name is appreciable in nothing more than in wine. Once Saumur, as Saumur, was unknown in the world's markets. The vigneron of the district simply bottled their wine and sent it to Epernay and Rheims, where it was labelled and sent forth as champagne of an approved brand. It was a good wine and genuine, though without the *finesse* of the wine under whose name it masqueraded, but people looked at the brand, drank it, and were satisfied. Under its own proper name people regard Saumur nowadays with distrust, fearful of being convicted of the heinous social offence of giving their friends a wine which they know to be cheap.

Apropos of this distrust of the inexpensive, Mr. Mattieu Williams tells a story very much to the point.¹ A friend in the wine trade offered him a glass of a wine which he drank himself when at home, and gave to his family. It was genuine grape juice and came from the Côte d'Or district, and the merchant was able to retail it at 12s. per dozen at a fair profit. 'Afterwards,' says Mr. Williams, 'when calling at his place of business in the West End, he told me that one of his best customers had just been tasting the various samples of dinner claret then remaining on the table, some of them expensive, and that he had chosen the same as I had, but what was my friend to do? Had he quoted 12s. per dozen, he would have lost one of his best customers and have sacrificed his reputation as a high-class wine merchant; therefore he quoted 54s., and both buyer and seller were perfectly satisfied; the wine merchant made a large profit, and the customer obtained what he demanded—a good wine at a "respectable price." He could not insult his friends by putting cheap 12s. trash on his table.'

But to return to champagne and its imitations. 'Rogue-men,' says a pleasant writer on the subject, 'exploit the weaknesses of goose-men, and vanity is the especial weakness of most of us. Champagne was at one time an expensive wine, a rare wine, a wine for kings and their courts, wherefore it became desired of snobs. We thought that to drink champagne made us look rich and noble, just as some of us think it makes us look rich and noble to put fantastic heraldry on our note-paper and our linen.

¹ *The Chemistry of Cookery* (Chatto & Windus), p. 291.

Vanity has created the demand, and this demand the rogue-men have not been slow to supply.' Russia, it is said, consumes annually more champagne than the entire product of the district, but the Russians affect a sweet champagne, while we English, happily for ourselves, drink a dry wine, in spite of Sydney Smith, who held that the man who said he liked dry champagne would say anything. Now there is safety in this wholesome insular taste of ours, for dry champagne almost defies disguise, being but the natural *vin brut* with but the smallest addition of liqueur. In sweet champagne the original character of the wine can be so completely masked by the additions that it may not be detected until the next morning, or possibly not even then. There have been some very successful champagne parodies perpetrated upon the simple basis of petroleum.

The artificial production of wine is a large subject and full of curiosities. Strange things are done and written in the name of trade, and it is not very many years since the representative of an English trade paper wrote a long account of his visit to a Hamburg wine factory, and was loud in praise of all that he saw there. The advantage of having a wine composed to suit your individual taste seemed to him as obvious as the superiority of a suit of clothes made to measure over the stock-in-trade of the slop shop. In Hamburg they do employ genuine wine as the basis of their concoctions. Bolder and more original were the wholesale and export wine merchants who got into trouble in Paris a few years ago through selling a certain raspberry-scented Médoc, entirely innocent of grape juice—a preparation which rightly merited to be described as 'curious,' coloured with an extract of coal-tar and sweetened with glucose.

Artificial wine has of course been often made as a laboratory experiment, but the harmless colouring has always been more or less difficult. Mr. Williams cites the case of a Birmingham chemist, who produced a very fine claret (Château Digbeth) by fortifying with silent spirit a solution of cream of tartar, and flavouring with orris-root. Tasted in the dark it was all that could be desired for introducing a new industry to Birmingham; but the wine was white and every colouring material that he tried marred the flavour and bouquet. The chemist had a conscience, and so refrained from using magenta dye, which is prepared by boiling aniline over dry arsenic acid; so nothing came of Château Digbeth commercially.¹

¹ *The Chemistry of Cookery*, p. 286.

Parmentier, in whose honour the potato lovers of Metz erected a statue, piqued himself upon a certain Muscadine wine of good character, which he once made from 216 lbs. of sugar, 9 lbs. crystals of tartar, 72 lbs. elder-flowers, and 307 lbs. of water.

A rather more elaborate synthetical preparation of Fabroni's had for ingredients 864 lbs. sugar, 24 lbs. gum arabic, 24 lbs. tartar, 3 lbs. tartareous acid, 36 lbs. gluten of wheat, and 1,728 quarts of water.

These diversions of great minds are rather beyond the scope of minor manipulators. How wines were—possibly are—composed to suit different palates is amusingly illustrated in a little sketch in one of Poole's tales.

The author, an ex-Cantab, meets one Burley, the retired landlord of a Cambridge inn, in a country churchyard, and in the course of conversation about old times rates him on the quality of the wines he sold—'they were all detestable—port, Madeira, claret, champagne.'

'There now, sir; to prove how much gentlemen may be mistaken, I assure you, sir, as I am an honest man, I never had but two sorts of wine in my cellar—port and sherry.'

'How? when I myself have tried your claret, your——'

'Yes, sir, *my* claret, sir. One is obliged to give gentlemen everything they ask for, sir. Gentlemen who pay their money, sir, have a right to be served with whatever they may please to order, sir. But to explain the thing at once, sir, you must know that I had not been long in business when I discovered that gentlemen knew very little about wine, but that if they did not find some fault or other they would appear to know much less—always excepting the young gentlemen from Cambridge, sir, and they are excellent judges. Well, sir, with respect to my dinner wines I was always tolerably safe; gentlemen seldom find fault at dinner, so whether it might happen to be Madeira, or pale sherry, or brown, or——'

'Why, just now you told me you had but two sorts of wine in your cellar.'

'Very true, sir; port and sherry. But this was my plan, sir. If anyone ordered Madeira, from one bottle of sherry take two glasses of wine, which replace by two glasses of brandy, and add thereto a slight squeeze of lemon, and this I found to give general satisfaction, especially to the young gentlemen from Cambridge, sir. But, upon the word of an honest man, I could scarcely get a living profit by my Madeira, sir, for I always used

the best brandy. As to the pale and brown sherry, sir, a couple of glasses of nice, pure water, in place of the same quantity of wine, made what I used to call my delicate pale (by the bye, a squeeze of lemon added to that made a very fair Bucellas, sir, a wine not much called for now, sir), and for my old brown sherry a *leetle* brown sugar was the thing. It looked very much like sherry that had been twice to the East Indies, sir, and indeed to my customers, who were very particular about their wines, I used to serve it as such.'

'But, Mr. Burley, wasn't such a proceeding of a character rather——'

'I guess what you would say, sir; but I knew it to be a wholesome wine at bottom, sir. But my port was the wine which gave me most trouble. Gentlemen seldom agree about port, sir. One gentleman would say, "Burley, I don't like this wine; it is too heavy!" "Is it, sir? I think I can find you a lighter." Out went a glass of wine and *in* went a glass of water. "Well, sir," I'd say, "how do you approve of *that*?" "Why—um—no; I can't say——" "I understand, sir; you like an older wine—softer? I think I can please you, sir." Pump again, sir. "Now, sir," says I (wiping the decanter with a napkin and triumphantly holding it up to the light), "try this, if you please." "That's it, Burley, that's the very wine; bring another bottle of the same." But one can't please everybody the same way. Some gentlemen would complain of my port as being poor—without body. In went one glass of brandy. If that didn't answer, "Ay, gentleman," says I, "I know what will please you; you like a fuller-bodied, rougher wine." Out went two glasses of wine, and in went two or three glasses of brandy. This used to be a very favourite wine, but only with the young gentlemen from Cambridge, sir.'

'And your claret?'

'My good, wholesome port, again, sir. Three wines out, three waters in, one pinch of tartaric acid, two ditto orris-powder. For a fuller claret, a little brandy; for a lighter claret, more water.'

'But how did you contrive about Burgundy?'

'That was my claret, sir, with from three to six drops of bergamot, according as gentlemen liked a full flavour or a delicate flavour. As for champagne, that, of course, I made myself.'

'How do you mean, of course?'

'Oh, sir! Surely everybody makes his own champagne, else what can become of all the gooseberries?'

Of all wine superstitions, probably that which has been most persistently cherished by gastronomes is the theory that age enriches wines illimitably. It is not by any means a modern idea, for Pliny talks glibly of wine two hundred years old and even more. If there be one law of nature which knows no exception, it is that all things organic are subject to decay. Now wine is an organic product, and when its ripest stage is reached and passed the process of decomposition begins. Dosing with foreign substances, fortification with alcohol, care of temperature, and other devices may stave off the fatal decline, but, at most, only for a short time; notwithstanding which tolerably well-known fact, it is sufficient for the contents of a well-known cellar to be put up to auction, for connoisseurs almost to fight for the possession at fabulous prices of a few bottles of wine so old as to have become long since undrinkable.

About two years ago a paragraph went the round of the London papers to the effect that the wines of the late King of Bavaria had been bought by speculators at enormous prices, for resale in the English market. A flowery description was given of the contents of this remarkable collection, the pearl of which was said to be a Festenwein of 1540, 'which has preserved its limpidity, its beautiful golden colour, and some of its bouquet. After it figures honourably the Steinwein of 1640 and 1731.' Nothing has since been heard of these wonderful vintages, and it is possible that the whole paragraph was due to the inventive genius of some newspaper man hard up for copy. To suppose that any wine vintaged three and a half centuries ago would retain anything of its original character is absurd. The mere historical repute of an old wine, however, no doubt gives it often a fictitious value.

There was a sensational Madeira sale in Paris in 1858, when among the effects of the Duchesse de Raguse some forty-four bottles of wine, the last of the famous 1814 pipe of Madeira, were literally sold for their weight in gold to Rothschild, who was hotly opposed by Véron and Millaud. This pipe of Madeira had lain at the bottom of the sea for thirty-six years, the vessel in which it was shipped having been wrecked at the mouth of the Scheldt in 1778. The hull was raised in 1814, and there was then a hot contest for the possession of the wine, Louis XVIII. sending a special agent to secure it for him. A share of the wine was presented to the French Consul at Antwerp, from whose possession a portion passed to the cellars of the Duc de Raguse.

Whether the wine really resisted the effects of its long immersion, we have no evidence to show. Véron claimed that he had made its reputation by mentioning it in his Memoirs. Possibly this is all the basis which its reputation really had.

The antiquity of the wines of the ancients is attributable to the fact that they seem to have been artificial compounds, rather of the nature of extracts or syrups than of wine. Pliny talks of an old wine which was of the consistency of honey, and had to be dissolved in hot water and strained through linen before it could be used. Spices and fragrant roots, myrrh, cassia, nard and pepper were freely added, and among the peculiarities of Roman taste was a fancy for the addition of sea-water. The best authenticated stories of fine old wines that retain a flavour and character in extreme age tend to the belief that they must originally have been strongly fortified.

Dr. Henderson, quoting Columella, gives one recipe for doctoring wine to make it keep, as follows: To ninety amphoræ of must, which had been evaporated to a third, ten sextarii of liquid Nemeturican pitch or tar, washed in boiled sea-water, and a pound and a half of turpentine resin, are directed to be added; and the liquor being again reduced two-thirds by evaporation, six pounds of crude pitch in powder are to be gradually mixed with it, together with a liberal allowance of various aromatic herbs, such as spikenard, fleur-de-lis, myrrh, cardamoms, saffron, melilot, cassia, sweet-scented hay, all well bruised and sifted. Verily Hamburgh could do no worse.

The author of 'Wine and Wine Countries' gives an interesting account of a marvellous Montilla he found in an old Spaniard's bed-chamber at Cordova. The building had formerly been a Moorish palace, and a corridor, supported on marble columns, led to a balcony whence access was gained to the room, whose sole furniture was a truckle bed and one small chair. But along the side of the lofty chamber, about six or eight feet from the ground, was a range of butts of wine on a platform, gilded and decorated with the images of saints. The taps and bungs were protected from pilferers by hinged bars of iron with a padlock at the end.

The wine in one of the casks, the owner said, belonged to his grandfather, who died forty years ago, and his grandfather had had it from *his* grandfather, who, when he bequeathed it, said it was over a hundred years old, from which Mr. Tovey reckoned its age as about two centuries, but, as he justly observes, some allowance must be made for exaggeration. He describes the wine as

one to remember. 'It had all the flavours of the choicest of wines, be they of what country they may. It was very powerful, and must originally have been more like a syrup than anything else.'

The history of the wine trade is full of records of sensational sales of wines of legendary repute. The Blamire sale attracted attention for more reasons than one, for Mr. George Blamire, who was a barrister, a scholar, and a man of means, had enlisted the interest of the world by shutting himself up for many years in his chambers in the Adelphi, and there leading the life of a very dirty hermit. When at last he died, about a quarter of a century ago, his effects were put up to auction, and among them was a magnificent cellar of wine, inherited from his father, Dr. Blamire of Carlisle, which, with characteristic eccentricity, he had walled up and left to the solitude to which he had condemned himself. Now he was dead the cellar was unwall'd, its treasures brought to light, and a catalogue prepared, which in its flights of poetic fancy had been worthy of George Robins at his best.

'Think,' says the writer of a contemporary article on the subject, 'think of the ports of 1820, possessing all the characteristics of that wonderful vintage. Think of the charming violet bouquet of the finest wine of 1811 in all its richness and perfection. Muse over the prodigious price of thirty-five pounds a dozen paid for the first named of these vintages. Then there were the "crisp and dry sherries," "the West India ditto" (date unknown), "the elegant, nectar-like Madeira," "the authentic Jamaica rum," "bottled in 1720, recorked in 1820, and forming now an indescribable compound of the vine branch, leaf, grape, and sugar-cane which renders it incomparable." Finally, there was "the luscious Lachryma," and the "pure sans-dated ports of the last century," all "invested with an ineffable delicacy that can only be acquired in the etherealising laboratory of nature."'

The 'laboratory of nature' is hardly likely to have been responsible for the processes which made drinkable the 'pure sans-dated ports of the last century,' if, indeed, they were drinkable at all.

There is a story of questionable authenticity told of a certain bin of choice wine which George IV. valued so highly that he would only have it produced on special occasions. The household were not so scrupulous, however, and drank the port with so little discretion that when the King ordered it to be brought to table one day, it was found that there was but one bottle left. Dismay

sat upon all countenances; there were still some hours to dinner, and a trusty messenger rushed round to the confidential purveyor to the palace with the single bottle in his hand as a sample, to try and get it matched. He was fortunately successful. The artist produced a blend of the same character as the sample, and promised to prepare some more of the same whenever it was wanted; 'only,' he darkly hinted, 'it must always be drunk the same night, for it would not keep till the next morning.'

The story sounds somewhat mythical, but that there may be a certain element of truth in it appears from an experience related many years ago by the late Mr. Charles Tovey. He was preparing the wine list for a civic dinner, and found that a supply of 1820 port, upon which he reckoned, had given out. Now two of his guests were men in the wine trade, who, he knew, were looking forward specially to this 1820 wine. So to humour them he set to work to match it, and by blending some 1834, which at that time had not been long in bottle, and was insufficiently matured, with a white port, sound and astringent, which had been in the cellars of a county family for generations, he produced so exact an imitation of the 1820 wine that the critics were fairly taken in. But mark the sequel. He was so pleased with his success that he laid down a dozen of the blended wine and kept it for twelve months, only to find at the end of that time that it was worthless—a nondescript absolutely without character. The moral of which little story—and it is always well to conclude with a moral—is that no man's judgment about wine is infallible, and that the best-intentioned host will take pleasure in deluding you about the contents of his cellar whenever he can.

CHARLES COOPER.

Alcestis : a Fragment.

—THEN, as I passed
 From that dim wood, and faced the bright'ning East
 Rose-red with morn, I heard a clear voice sing
 Of a life's goal won through the gate of death,
 And saw one by a stream whose plashing waves
 Made music to her singing, as they washed
 The low, green banks, and touched the meadow-grass
 With a new brightness. In her faithful eyes
 Shone a great love, and something more than love—
 The look of one whose soul's clear vision saw
 Life's highest end, and her unswerving will
 Passed to it dauntless, recking naught of pain,
 Naught ev'n of death, so she might win that end.
 Then, as I looked, she turned, and with a voice
 Whose music seemed the echo of that song,
 She asked me, 'Stranger, hast thou heard my name?
 I am Alcestis, neither wise nor great,
 If greatness be aught other than the meed
 Of faithful duty, for I hold her highest
 Who, being a wife, lives in no narrow round
 Of self and pleasure, but with larger soul
 Enfolds her husband's life, and counts it still
 The best part of her own. I was a queen,
 Blest with all royal wealth, but chiefly blest
 In my great love; for love is woman's wealth,
 Peasant or queen, enriching all her life
 With golden thoughts and deeds. What marvel, then,
 The choice being mine, that I should choose to die?
 Sweet was my life, but sweeter far to know
 My love had saved my husband. Ah! the days,
 The blissful days at Pheræ! One long dream

Of love and joy, till duty's sterner voice
Broke the sweet spell, and called me to my doom.
Yet think not, friend, I murmur that 'twas mine
To know the highest life; for this is highest,
To love not self, but others; by this law
To live love-loyal, and, if need be, die.'

She ceased, and left me musing; for I knew
Mine eyes had seen the loveliest form of life,
God's sweetest gift—the noble woman-soul,
Faithful and free, fulfilling, uncompelled,
The highest law of being.

F. W. PARSONS.

Janet.

A SEPTEMBER DAY.

There came a day
As still as heaven.

‘SO Janet is not to go, is she not?’ said Sir Thomas Greythorpe, knitting a pair of bushy eyebrows. ‘Well, I don’t suppose she will much mind, and certainly it lessens the expense. The way the money flies in these parts is positively diabolical. It’s pay me here and pay me there, till I am afraid of taking so much as a walk along the shore, or setting foot on the deck of a steamboat to see a friend off! Heigho! The Highlands may be all very fine in August and September, but they make a dence of a hole in one’s pocket—that’s what I know. As for this Staffa and Iona business, we might have left it alone, I thought. We could have put it on the weather or something——’ But here the speaker, who was sitting in a front room of one of the great hotels at Oban, cast his eye up the Sound of Kerrara, and then round upon the island of Lismore, and beheld on either side nothing but a stretch of glorious blue water and sunlit promontories, while overhead there was an absolutely cloudless sky, and Sir Thomas felt that a feint of ‘putting it on the weather’ would hardly take in the veriest babe. ‘All the same, it’s a nuisance,’ he muttered.

‘We could not be here and *not* go,’ said his wife.

‘Humph! I don’t see that; we have been to a lot of places; I don’t see that it would signify, if only we had a decent excuse.’

‘But we have really no excuse, and Isabella has set her heart upon it. She has been talking with young Stronachan, and he has set her on. He says Fingal’s Cave is the one thing in Scotland to see. I fancy we should feel rather foolish if we were to

go back to Worcestershire without seeing it, when we should have been so near.'

'Well, it is an expensive trip, I warn you. You, and I, and Isabella'—reckoning on his fingers—'then there's Florry—what about her? Is she to go, or to stay with Janet?'

'Oh, she can go,' said Lady Greythorpe, indifferently. 'She pays for herself, so it makes no matter. And Janet can look after her aunt while we are away.'

'It is rather hard upon Janet, though,' and Sir Thomas's face softened as he turned and looked at his youngest daughter. 'Eh, Janet? I dare say you would like to go as well as the rest of us.'

'Nonsense!' interposed Janet's mother, with some asperity. 'Janet knows she cannot have everything; and it was a very great treat indeed for her to come to Scotland at all. Considering that we had all the trouble—for it is a trouble, if nothing else—of bringing your sister and her girl with us, and having to engage their rooms as well as our own on ahead wherever we go, Janet may think herself exceedingly well off to be here at all; and if she cannot spend a happy day on this delightful shore—or I dare say your aunt will take you for a drive along the Gallinach road, and you can look out for our steamboat coming home'—turning to her daughter likewise—'why—what—what in the world, child—what do you mean—what is this about?' exclaimed she the next moment. 'What! *crying*? Oh, for shame, Janet! You must indeed be spoilt by all the pleasure you have had, if it makes you behave like this. Oh, dear me, this is disgraceful! Really—I—I'—turning over the books on the table in obvious discomfiture, while her husband again wheeled round his chair to the window, as though to gaze upon a pleasanter prospect than was afforded by the room within.

Poor Janet! She had listened to the above discussion from the first with a swelling heart. So much depended upon it.

The proposition of leaving her out of the party being formed for the next day's excursion had only just been made when she entered the room wherein her parents sat, and the first words that fell upon her ear were those with which our little story opens.

Instantly she had realised that they fixed her doom. Once her father was started on the track of his special grievance for the moment, namely, the dearness of Scotch hotels and the exorbitant charges demanded for every species of transit during

the Highland 'season,' he was ready to make all considerations give way, if by any means he might save something out of the fire.

She had understood that he had been startled by the amount to which a short trip—a trip, nevertheless, which had been one of the principal projected items of the Scotch tour—would run up; and a cold thrill had shot through her veins lest it should be abandoned in consequence. This would have been dreadful enough.

To behold with her own young enthusiastic eyes the great pillars of the famous Fingal's Cave, to tread the sacred shores of holy Iona, and gather a flower or a weed from the graves of the Scottish kings who rest beneath the shade of its ruined cathedral, had been Janet's dream ever since the whole expedition was arranged.

Janet was half Scotch by blood, more than half by every other mode of reckoning.

Ever since she had spent a summer, at an early and impressionable age, with her maternal relatives at their West Highland home, she had enshrined the country, the people, the language, together with every tradition and association, in her heart of hearts.

That her own name was a Highland girl's name was delightful. That she might if she chose wear tartan—her mother's Campbell tartan—was insisted upon.

That no place was like the Campbells' place, and no people like the Campbells themselves, was a part of her creed; and to have called the young head of the house anything but 'Stronachan'—he being Campbell of Stronachan, and, of course, styled only by the latter name in his native place—would have been impossible.

Lady Greythorpe had no objection to all of this.

For her own part she was not enthusiastic; but if Janet chose to remember that her mother had a pedigree, and to break out into extravagant descriptions of her mother's native place, well and good. Janet was a foolish girl, but there was no harm in this particular folly.

Isabella was her mother's child, however.

Isabella cared a thousand times more for riding in the Row on a bright May day, for dancing in great London drawing-rooms and shopping in London shops, than for all the purple moors and rocky fells of bold Argyle.

Stronachan itself she liked well enough. It was a comfortable old place, snugly situated, and not too far out of the way.

As for Stronachan, the man?

'I really think Isabella might do worse, my dear?' There had been a little confidence between the parents a few weeks before, and perhaps it may not be too much to say that the confidence had partly brought about the trip which followed.

'He is a fine, handsome fellow,' proceeded Lady Greythorpe, 'and he certainly is very attentive. This has been Bella's third season,' and she paused suggestively.

'You told me she was such a beauty she was sure to marry at once,' Sir Thomas had retorted. 'You would never have let me in for all those expensive London seasons but for that.'

'You know very well she might have married had she chosen.'

'Humph! That affair? That was a very poor do. Surely she can do better——'

'Precisely what I say. Let us take her to Scotland and see what comes to it.'

Accordingly to Scotland the Greythorpes, accompanied also by Sir Thomas's brother's widow and her only daughter, had betaken themselves, and so far all had gone well.

They had, on the plea of the weather—which on some occasions had been accommodating—cut short divers rounds and troublesome *détours*; and had arrived at Oban, which was to be their head-quarters, after only a week or two frittered away, according to Sir Thomas, on the tops of coaches and steamboats. At Oban young Stronachan had made his appearance, and thenceforth the whole scene had changed its aspect for one member of the party.

That member was only insignificant Janet—Janet, the school-girl—Janet, who had been tacked on at the last moment because no one knew what else to do with her, and because scarlatina had broken out at the house to which she ought to have been sent for her holidays.

Janet had lain awake all night from bliss, when the change in her programme had first been announced.

She had been so happy, so gleeful, so perfectly content with everything, and agreeable to everything, throughout the tour hitherto, that it was with some reason that her mother now contended she must have been spoilt by pleasure when she could allow a single deprivation to bring tears to her eyes.

Lady Greythorpe did not understand that the tears were compounded of various ingredients.

First of all, there was the keen disappointment of not seeing the great sight of the Hebrides, of not realising for herself the majesty and the grandeur of the scene with whose outlines she was so familiar (for a little engraving, presented in her childhood by the very boy cousin who was now again to the front, was one of Janet's most treasured possessions).

Secondly, there was the bitterness of finding that she alone was to be left out of the project; that the project was not to be given up, as she had erst dreaded; but that while all the rest (with one exception) were to start by the early boat—and oh! how infinitely less they cared about it than she did!—she only was to remain behind.

And, thirdly—but we will not pry into the third and deepest trouble of all. Enough that over the prospect of a merry day there had of late been cast a new and unforeseen glamour; that the early start, the sail, the traversing of sparkling water, the gazing upon mountain sides and ocean cliffs, the plunging into echoing cavities and scaling bold ascents, the embarking, the disembarking—every event and circumstance of the long September day, in short—had been dwelt upon in visions of the night, and traced out with a pen dipped in sunbeams.

The very night before, Stronachan had been prognosticating a rare day, and had added something besides which had not been for the ear of everybody.

'We'll go and sit on the gangway, Janet,' he had murmured, lying on the heather by her side. 'I know the captain of the Staffa boat, and he will let me go where other people may not. It will be glorious. We are in for a spell of this dead calm weather. It comes in September sometimes,' he had added aloud. The reader may guess at what particular point in the above the young laird had lifted his face and spoken for the benefit of all.

'What was he saying?' inquired Lady Greythorpe of her elder daughter, aside.

'Only something about the weather,' replied Isabella, indifferently.

This had taken place while all the party were seated on one of the heathery heights above the bay, during which encampment young Stronachan had demanded the carrying out of the proposed Staffa and Iona expedition, and had been responded to with seeming alacrity and cheerfulness,

'I suppose you go with us?' his aunt had merely added, as an apparent after-thought.

'Oh, of course,' the young man had rejoined; and then he had turned to draw Janet's attention to the double peak of Ben Cruachan, darkly purple against the clear heavens beyond, and had looked upon the affair as settled. He had been fishing with some friends during the whole of the next day, the day on which Janet, coming into the hotel sitting-room, found her father and mother holding their discussion, and, as he was not to return until late, she knew that he would never hear of her sentence until it had been actually carried into effect. He was to meet the rest of the party on board the boat in the morning.

Would not he be disappointed as she was!

Yet not a word could Janet say.

'Yes, it is an excellent plan,' assented Mrs. Greythorpe, the semi-invalid, who had always to do less than other people could, and who, truth to tell, had had a good many solitary days of late. 'Janet dislikes the sea?'

'Oh, I *don't*,' irrepressibly burst from Janet.

'Then I suppose there is some other reason. But we shall be very comfortable together at home. We can hire an open carriage and drive up the Sound of Kerrara, and watch for the boat on its return.'

'Just what I said,' observed her sister-in-law. 'We shall be wending our way down the Sound some time between six and seven o'clock. I understand that to-morrow the steamboat makes the circuit in that manner. We go by the Sound of Mull, and return by the Sound of Kerrara. To-day, you see, she is coming back the other way. Stronachan says there is only the one route, but on alternate days the steamboat takes it differently. It is a very long excursion, but I dare say we shall enjoy it. Florry goes, I suppose?'

'Oh, dear me, I should know it if Florry did not,' replied Mrs. Greythorpe, laughing. 'Florry always likes to go everywhere. But Janet is a good girl to stay behind.'

It was too much! No hope from any quarter! And Stronachan out of the way!

Janet's lips quivered, her chin shook, and she was only just able to get to the other side of the parlour door, and anon to gain the seclusion of her own little room on the landing above, ere the torrent which had been pent up before, was let loose in floods over her cheeks.

Long and loud she sobbed passionately.

Oh, how cruel, how cruel it was!

Her day—it was to have been *her* day—to be thus foully dealt with! Her summer night dream to be thus rudely shattered!

She took out the little tuft of heather-bell wherewith her cousin had endowed her, and wept over it. She wetted through her pocket-handkerchief; and then, afraid of tell-tale flushes, leaned through the open casement, and strove to cool her burning eyelids.

It seemed to her as if everybody must divine why she so greatly longed to go on the morrow, why she so beat against the bars that held her back from the morrow's happiness.

It should have been such a happy day. She would have worn her pretty tweed dress and close-fitting hat—Stronachan had told her what to wear—and she had meant to make sure that she had on her neatest of laced boots, with a view to the stepping ashore and afloat, and her prettiest of little kid gloves, with an eye to the hand that should have guided her where to sit and where to stand. Stronachan had laughed at her enthusiasm; had vowed he would manoeuvre for her to be left behind on the lonely isle; had threatened dangers and hardships. She had laughed at him back.

What did he know? What right had he to talk?

'I do think Janet should not be allowed to usurp Stronachan as she does,' Isabella had remarked with more asperity in her voice than was usual with her, after one of these passages of arms.

She had tried to 'usurp' Stronachan more or less herself, and had hardly succeeded. She had forecast terrors, difficulties, contingencies; and he had in return, so far from carrying on the phantasmagoria, merely assured her in a brief and business-like manner that all would be right.

It was after this that she had found cause of complaint against her sister.

Janet could make Stronachan talk, whatever she said. He had always a reply, a jest, an argument, a something, which necessitated bringing his laughing eyes to bear upon the limpid orbs of his girl cousin; and if Isabella, as she sometimes did, sought to enter into the jest or the argument, it fell flat.

Nevertheless, Miss Greythorpe told herself it was not Stronachan but Janet who was to blame, and assured her cousin Florence that she really did not like to annoy her parents, or she should certainly have pointed out to them that Janet was growing much too free-and-easy in her manner towards young men.

‘I suppose it is all *her*,’ Janet now wept and wailed. ‘I knew by her face yesterday she was up to something; and she has got papa and mamma to say I am not to go, because Stronachan always comes to my side when we walk out, and because he would sit by me in the boat last night.’

In which conclusion the young diviner was not far wrong. Isabella had not, indeed, outwardly suggested her condemnation, but she had insinuated the idea, and that skilfully. ‘I really think Janet would be just as well at home,’ she had told her mother. ‘She is not a very good sailor—though she declares she is—and there is no need for her to be taken *everywhere* just because she is allowed to be with us in her holidays. It makes her rather forward, going about like this, don’t you know?’

And Lady Greythorpe had instantly perceived to what the forwardness referred. She too had been annoyed to perceive her nephew linger behind when Janet had plunged into the wood after blaeberries, and finally clamber over the loose, moss-grown wall, and disappear into the woods himself. She had spoken somewhat sharply to Janet, and had not been appeased by Stronachan’s offering of a bunch of berries with the bloom on.

When Janet had come down to dinner that evening with a cluster of scarlet rowans at her breast, there had been an uneasy suspicion in the mother’s bosom that she had seen a sunburnt hand pluck those very rowans from a mountain ash upon their ramble; and she had noted that Bella had no floral ornament.

It was absurd to suppose that there could be anything real or tangible between the young laird and her chit of seventeen; but there might be some silly sentiment which would hinder sentiment of a more earnest and practical kind on his part.

It would be well to nip this cousinly nonsense in the bud; and the very first opportunity for nipping it, fell out as has been recorded above.

It seemed to the luckless Janet that she heard every clock strike and every bell ring, that broke the stillness of Oban Bay throughout the long light summer night which followed. Several times she rose up and went to her little window. Happily she had a room to herself, for Isabella and Florence preferred each other’s company; and never had this isolation been more welcome.

Leaning out and drinking in the solemn scene—the motionless vessels, the weird buildings, the deep, still waters shrouded by the still more deeply shadowed heights—poor Janet’s eyes burned.

How she did love this spot! How she loved the beauteous Hebrides! How she loved—— A leap of the veins, a catch of the breath, a hot blush, and no syllable framed even in the maiden's heart of hearts.

But what a night it was! And what a day it was going to be!

Already the pale light was spreading over the eastern horizon, when for the last time the watcher sought her fevered couch and tried to think no more.

She could not sleep—of course she could not sleep; but she would lie still and—and now, what is this? She is on board the gaily crowding boat. She is on her way to the far-famed islets of the west; the ropes of the vessel are loosened, the paddle-wheels have begun to turn, when a shout is raised. A name is being called—yelled—shrieked—passed from one to another. Whose name? Her own. Everyone is calling 'Janet!' the air is full of 'Janet—Janet!'

Janet is found, and, oh, despair! Janet is found too soon. She is not to go, after all, with the departing travellers; she has been sent for to return to land; she is being hurried off the boat, when her foot slips; the gangway has no protecting arms; she falls down—down; Stronachan seizes her—falls after her—they both plunge into the abyss——

'Good gracious, Janet! What a noise you are making! Florence and I could not think what it was! We heard such a scream. I suppose you had the nightmare, but I never heard anyone make such a din. Are you awake now? Will you promise not to drop off to sleep on your back again? That is what is at the bottom of it. You are lying on your back. You should never do that——'

'Oh, do be quiet!' groaned Janet.

'Well, shut your eyes, and go to sleep quietly then. We are off, but there is no need for you to rise yet. It is six o'clock, and the boat starts in half an hour. Such a glorious morning! Good-bye!' And the door closed.

At first the speaker might have fancied that her advice was to be followed, and that the curly head which pressed the pillow would soon be again wrapped in slumber; but had Isabella waited a few minutes more, she would have heard sounds and seen a sight which would have altered her opinion.

Janet was sitting up in bed.

Her eyes were dry now—dry and hot as live coals. It seemed

to her that even in her sleep she had never lost sight of the dreadful sentence under which she lay, and that the dream from which she had awakened screaming, had been but little worse than the sorrowful reality.

Through her open casement she could behold the bright fruition of the dawn's early promise.

It was a day of days.

Not a cloud the size of a man's hand flecked the pale blue sky. Not a ripple broke the glistening sheet of glassy sea beneath. A pearly mist just hung over the distance.

In the bay itself every spar and sheet of the innumerable craft collected there was mirrored with a reflection so truthful as to make it uncertain at what point bow and stern touched the water.

In the midst of Nature's stillness, however, every other kind of world was on the full swing of activity.

The deck of every steamer, yacht, launch, herring-skow was alive; the thud of oars in their row-locks resounded from plying open boats; the clang of sharp, brisk, inspiring bells announced the speedy departure of one excursion boat and another on their various routes. Passengers were crowding their gangways. Vehicles were every moment arriving on the pier, and discharging their hurrying freights. It appeared as if everyone had suddenly started up with the conviction that it would be a crime to waste such a day on any ordinary occupation, and that there had been a simultaneous awakening to a resolve to cast all else aside, and sail away hither and thither over the gleaming water.

Fullest of all and gayest with bunting, was the Staffa boat.

None was so great a favourite. A continued stream poured in upon her deck as her bell again and again sharply sounded, warning of departure. It was past the stated time; it was ten minutes, quarter of an hour past. There seemed scarce any cessation in the arrivals.

Five minutes to seven o'clock.

'Oh, *why* does she not go?' cried poor Janet at last in an agony, and threw herself back upon her pillow, with sobs and tears breaking out afresh.

She only raised herself once again for a long time after that.

This was when the bells ceased, and, holding her breath to listen, she could catch the sound of paddle-wheels, and knew that the boat was loosed from her moorings, and was slowly getting up her steam as she wheeled round into the centre of the harbour,

in order to obtain a clearer passage through the crowd of vessels at anchor.

Then Janet looked.

In another second or two, full into view came the jauntily decorated prow, and the fullest Staffa boat of the year, teeming from stem to stern with a rainbow-like assemblage of joyous sightseers, fluttering with parasols and bristling with telescopes, with crowds overhanging every rail and ledge, and swarming over gangways and paddle-boxes, cut her way through the glassy water, and made for the entrance of the bay.

And they were all there!

And up to the very last she had—yes, now, she knew she had—hoped against hope that something, *something*, would happen to let her, even her, be there too.

Her father had looked uneasy—had that meant anything? Her mother had made an inquiry or two—did they refer to this point? Last of all, her aunt Susan had privately interrogated herself as to the real reason of her remaining behind?

Janet had responded breathlessly with what she believed to be the truth.

It was, she had said, an expensive day's pleasure, and she fancied her father thought he had spent a good deal already.

Then her lips had parted in her eagerness, and she had fixed a pair of hungry eyes upon her aunt, the while her heart had beat in an ecstasy of anticipation.

Mrs. Greybrooke had said nothing.

'Perhaps she will go quietly to papa,' Janet had whispered to herself. 'Papa would not mind if she did offer to pay for me. She is better off than we are; and she is such a near relation that he could not be affronted.'

And almost immediately afterwards her father had come in, and with simple wile the poor child had offered him her seat in the window beside her aunt, and had stolen out of sight and hearing, not to be any hindrance in case of a private word being desired.

This had happened late in the evening of the night before.

It had been a second blow, but little inferior to the first, when bed-time had come and there had not been a word said to reverse the stern decree of fate.

All was now over; hopes and fears were alike at an end; and for more than an hour after the thin smoke of the departing steamer had disappeared, the forlorn Janet lay like one stunned, staring with wide-open eyes into vacancy.

She felt so sorry for herself. She had a kind of strange pity for her poor self.

Nothing could ever give her back this butterfly day that was to have been.

No after-joys could make up for this loss.

Somehow she knew that through all years to come *she* would grieve for this poor girl who was lying here, and whom no one else seemed to compassionate at all. She would know what this poor girl had suffered. She would never think of it as nothing, as a mere trifle which would soon pass out of memory. She would remember how the poor little heart had been wrung, and how the eyes had poured forth, and how the hot cheeks had been glazed with tears. Would it not seem wonderful that no other soul had cared whether Janet cried or not?

At length Janet rose.

The sun was shining more and more brightly, and so full of stir and bustle was the merry world below, that there would have been no chance of further repose even had such been desired.

'I will go out-of-doors and sit on one of the garden seats,' murmured Janet to herself. 'Aunt Susan never comes down till half-past nine, but I cannot stay another whole hour in bed. It is only eight o'clock now. Eight o'clock, and they have been gone more than an hour! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!'

But in spite of sighs and sadness, she rose and dressed herself. Some fancy induced her to put on the tweed dress—Stronachan's dress. Afterwards she often wondered what had ever made her think of doing so. The tweed was too hot for so warm a day on shore, and only the inevitable ocean breeze would have made it acceptable on board a steamer.

But the frock became Janet, and she took it down from its peg in the wardrobe, and then donned the hat to match. Also, she laced on the boots that should have trod the Staffa shore, and smiled a little melancholy smile to herself as she did so. 'I will carry out the make-believe all through,' she said.

When fully equipped, it was a relief to leave behind the small, bare chamber with its plaintive associations, and step downstairs to see what others were doing. Not that she cared what others were doing—there were no 'others' there whose doings were worth the thinking about; but still she found herself noting this and that.

She noted that the hotel seemed very empty, while the bay, on the other hand, appeared to be unusually full. She noted that the

large, beautifully appointed steam-yacht which had come to anchor late the previous night, had sent out a trim gig, which was just approaching the shore; and she noticed that in it was a kilted Highlander, at sight of whom her heart gave a throb, for he reminded her of her cousin Stronachan.

Then she turned away, and found a seat under the shade of one of the few trees, where, looking out in the other direction, she fell to thinking and musing once more.

A voice broke in upon her reverie.

A voice! Whose voice? Who hailed her in familiar tones as 'Janet'? Whose step approached from behind? And whose hand caught hers as a swift torrent of words fell upon her ear?

A few moments before she had been reminded of her cousin—was it then, could it have been, Stronachan himself whom she had seen—and—and——

'I say, Janet, what luck that you did not go in that boat! I—hum—ha—missed it myself somehow. But there was a beastly crowd, and we should not have enjoyed it at all. And now, what do you think?' (eagerly). 'Such fun! My uncle Stewart's yacht—that one over there—came in late last night, and I have just been on board her; and she is off to Staffa in half an hour, and he wants us both to go. Your aunt can give you leave—or, better still, I dare say she will go with us. I am commissioned to invite you both.'

'But—but how did you know I had not gone with the rest?

'Oh, I—well, fact is, I was down at the boat,' allowed Stronachan, somewhat shamefacedly. 'I thought if you were all going, I would not break faith with you; but as soon as I found *you* were not there——'

Janet turned away her head.

'I did not seem to care,' added the speaker.

There was an awkward pause.

'We must not wait now,' cried he, however, in another minute.

'I promised my uncle to be back in half an hour.'

'But aunt Susan could never be ready in half an hour.'

'Oh, if she will go, I could just run back and explain. He is with the gig now. I am sure he would wait for your aunt. Of course half an hour was a figure of speech. But do you think she could be ready in an hour? We should breakfast on board, you know.'

'Oh, yes,' cried Janet, starting to her feet.

'And you think she will go?'

'I really think she will. She almost went with the rest. It was only the crowds, and the fear of its being a bad day, which prevented her. Now that she sees what a day it is——'

'Yes, a dead calm. She need not be afraid even of a swell.'

'And in a yacht——'

'And such a jolly yacht, Janet! Everything is splendid from top to stern; and only a few old fogies on board—my aunt Stewart, who is a benevolent old soul, and some elderly Glasgow men, rather vulgar, but quite inoffensive—oh, it will be first-rate! Do run and hurry your aunt. Tell her I'll be back here in exactly an hour.'

'But are you sure they can wait?'

'I am sure they *will* wait. They will be rather pleased, don't you know. Mrs. Greythorpe is a fine lady, and my uncle will be awfully flattered if she goes in his yacht, when she would not trust herself in the Staffa boat.'

'Yes—yes.'

'Fly, then!' But still he detained her. 'I say, Janet, were you—weren't you—it was not your doing, was it, that you did not go with the rest?'

'Oh, Stronachan!' Open-eyed, reproachful amazement.

'All right,' said he, cheerfully. 'I thought not; but I wanted to be quite sure. Nobody said anything, you know.'

'And—and—what did you say to them?' She was longing to hear this, and as the two were now on the move towards the house, time was not being wasted over the inquiry.

'That was easy enough,' replied he. 'I showed them my uncle's yacht just come in, and said he would probably expect me on board; and as I did not know how long he might propose remaining at anchorage here—but we'll make him remain, Janet,' laughing joyously—'he *shall* remain for our sakes now that he is come. He shall take us for some other sails as well as to-day's one. We'll go up to Fort William—it is a glorious sail, that—and down to the Juras, and—all right,' as he saw her quivering to be off; 'we'll have all day to talk in. Hurry now. I'll be back in less than an hour, and meet you here at the front. Bring a big cloak or two,' he shouted back, as he turned away at last.

Once released, Janet had no further inclination to linger. With the flight of a bird she skimmed up the broad staircase, and breathless tapped at her aunt's door. A certain recollection darted into her mind as she did so, and the same brought with it a thrill

of delight. Mrs. Greythorpe had been almost a little huffy on the subject of the Staffa expedition before she had heard the last of it.

At first, when it had been a mere nothing, she had been resigned and complacent; but at the table d'hôte of the previous evening, so much had it been talked about, so obviously had it been considered a thing to do, and so many people had announced their intention of doing it, that even a somewhat self-engrossed invalid had felt that she was out in the cold.

She had thrown out a few hints which had not been taken. But Janet now called to mind with infinite comfort that her own conviction had been that her aunt would have certainly gone, if anyone had pressed her to do so.

She had been right.

Mrs. Greythorpe, although indubitably startled by the suddenness of the present proposition, was flattered and gratified.

Who could say that she was not in request now?

What a charming idea it was of Stronachan's! And how lucky for her and Janet that he had thought of it!

On such a day she need have no fears, and, as it happened, she had had a good night, and felt fit for anything. Janet could have hugged the speaker on the spot.

It must be borne in mind that neither aunt nor niece had the least suspicion of there being any other hindrance to Janet's being of the Staffa party than that openly alleged; wherefore both consciences were clear, whatever dim ideas regarding Isabella her sister might have entertained. Isabella was not Janet's keeper, nor had Janet at any time recognised her right to intermeddle with her affairs.

Between the two, assisted by a willing maid, who foresaw a long day's release from bondage, and a nice little jaunt on her own account in consequence, the elderly lady was now made ready in a trice, and, fortified by a cup of tea, and assured of breakfast on board the yacht, she was actually in waiting on the doorstep before her young escort appeared.

Janet too was there—another Janet from the drooping figure on the garden seat.

Blushes, smiles, dimples, a sort of ecstasy of impatience, a trembling fear born of recent anguish—these combined formed the Janet of the doorstep.

'By Jove! I never saw her looking prettier!' thought the young man, who in this case had been the magician with his wand.

The reader has never been told whether Janet was or was not pretty, as a rule. This was because my heroine was much as people saw her. She changed with every change of circumstance; occasionally paling into insignificance, anon flushing into beauty. Those who forecast her future averred that by-and-by she would add to her charms, and that these would be not a few.

But Stronachan was content with Janet as she was. In his eyes she had all she needed, and to call forth the sunlight of her smile and cause the rose to mantle in her cheek, filled up his measure of content.

‘No hurry,’ he now cried, as he approached with rapid steps. ‘I do hope I have not hurried you, ma’am,’ to Mrs. Greythorpe. ‘I should be so sorry to have been abrupt,’ with all the charming deference of a successful and elated schemer; ‘we have plenty of time. Let me take your cloak. My uncle is much honoured by your going. His yacht is his hobby, and nothing pleases him more than to have it appreciated. He is waiting by the slip yonder. He has been getting some good things for breakfast, and told me to assure you that we should breakfast immediately we are on board. So that I do hope you won’t be the worse, ma’am,’ with renewed earnestness.

Janet laughed to herself as she listened.

But Mrs. Greythorpe saw nothing to laugh at. Never in her life had she been in higher feather. To have a handsome young gallant offering her his arm in this attentive manner, chatting about the honour she was doing his relation, interesting himself about her health and her appetite—what had she left to desire?

Accordingly everything was right. She was charmed with the spirit, with the adventure, with the daring of the whole thing. She was really quite invigorated by being brought out of doors into the delicious air at so early an hour. She was immensely obliged to Mr. and Mrs. Stewart for their most hospitable offer. And it appeared that her chief desire was to meet and pass the Staffa boat and wave a gay greeting, even if it should only be discovered when the day’s work was done from whom the greeting had been sent.

‘I have put a large handkerchief in my pocket on purpose,’ she said.

Demure Janet walked beside her, prim as a church mouse. But, oh, when they were really off! When the first noiseless stroke of the well-trained rowers sent the gig on its rejoicing way! And when, still better, the gig itself was tucked cosily up

and the yacht—the shining, glossy, spotless yacht, whose steam had been getting up for the last half-hour—had herself begun to move.

‘Let us just stop on deck till we are out of the bay, uncle.’

Stronachan had divined to what was due the unusual silence of his special companion. He perceived that she was wrapped in a trance of bliss, but that with the bliss there mingled another feeling. She was trembling with an indefinable agitation; a sense of insecurity still lurked beneath every new movement towards freedom. Oban Bay must be left behind ere she could feel beyond recall. A foolish fancy, of course, but still——

In truth, to be prosaic, the poor child had neither eaten nor drunk anything worth speaking of for nearly a week. She had been living on air as literally as the words can be construed; which means that her young, first love had consumed every other thought or feeling, and that nature, with its wants and necessities, had been set aside, in so far as nature could be thus maltreated.

But once seated at the tempting board spread out within the little elegant saloon, Janet did better than could have been expected.

It would indeed have intimated a miserable state of body and mind had she been indifferent to the excellent fare now before her. She felt almost hungry when the frizzling odour of the broiled Loch Fyne herring, only just out of the sea, assailed her nostrils; and a cup of good coffee tasted like nectar. Oat-cakes and marmalade must needs follow. Janet never took marmalade when at home, and she had not been enamoured of the oat-cakes proffered at the Scotch hotels; but Stronachan recommended the combination, and that was sufficient.

When she returned to the deck her young frame was conscious of a sense of warmth and satisfaction which made her no longer shiver with excitement and tremulous anxiety. She was now able to give herself up to happiness pure and unalloyed.

And it is good to be able to record that no one circumstance occurred throughout that long September day to mar its radiant hours. There was not one single drawback to detract from it as a memory; not a jarring sight nor sound to cause a ruffle on its fair surface.

The day grew only more and more brilliant as the sun rose higher and higher in the heavens. The gloomy brows of the dark Sound of Mull, storm-beaten by many a winter tempest, looked only noble, solemn, and steadfast now.

The battered walls of Duart, the grim crags of Ardtornish and Killundine, seemed only mournfully pathetic.

'Oh, how beautiful—how beautiful it all is!' cried Janet. She said the same a hundred times over.

It had been decided, for nautical reasons, to dispense with Mrs. Greythorpe's anticipated triumph of meeting and hailing the Staffa boat, and to follow in its wake.

Janet was glad of this. It seemed to her foolish fancy to do away with the last spark of lingering regret, and to carry out intact the day whereof she had dreamed. The day had become transformed, but she did not wish her former idol shattered, neither.

On sped the little yacht. The Sound of Mull was left behind; the great ranges of mountains in the north overtopped the smaller peaks in the foreground; and, finally, a broad expanse of ocean, only here and there broken by islets whose promontories seemed to draw back and shrink from the pale water which lay at their feet, was all that eye could behold in front.

Flights of sea birds hung, and poised, and flashed from point to point. The white tern darted hither and thither, just touching the still sea with the tips of their long, narrow wings, as though sporting with a giant asleep. Here and there a group of these ocean swallows would collect above some shining streak of silver, and, as it were, mock and gibe in the very spirit of mirthful frolic. Now and again one would skim out from amongst the rest, and circle aloft into the blue atmosphere above, or follow in the track of the little vessel.

Just outside the Isle of Staffa, Janet's heart came to a momentary standstill. She and Stronachan were leaning over the side together—(of course, together; they never were apart throughout the day)—when he uttered an exclamation, and there was the steamboat in the very act of embarking her crew.

The next moment, however, he could reassure an auditor to whom he perceived this was no good tidings.

'That must have been the last boat-load, Janet. They will be off directly. I will just run below and tell the engineer privately, to slacken speed till they are well out of the way. It would be just as well to let them be out of the way, would it not? My uncle will never know,' and he departed on his mission.

'He understands *exactly*,' said Janet to herself.

Time would fail me to tell a hundredth part of the events of that never-to-be-forgotten day. Everything was an event. Every few minutes brought fresh enchantment.

The happy young pair penetrated into the depths of the great

pillared dome, and with sobered smiles and chastened voices hearkened to its echoes. They had it to themselves—a new rapture; none others of the party accompanied them. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart had often visited the spot before, as had their guests also; while Mrs. Greythorpe was content with what she could behold from where she lay, reclining on luxurious cushions, piled up upon the fairy-like deck.

But Stronachan and the young English girl, whom he had promised should see everything and touch everything, were enjoined to take time and go whithersoever they would.

They encroached, of course. Nobody blamed them. The good host merely blinked his eyes and looked significantly at Janet's aunt when the two were seen leisurely strolling over the higher portions of the islet, what time he and his were beginning to weary for another meal.

The significance was thrown away. Mrs. Greythorpe was merely revelling in her own unaccustomed hardihood, and in her absolutely feeling well, brisk, and inclined for her dinner, although her tonic dinner pills had been left behind, in the hurry of the start.

When Janet came back to the yacht, she possessed all sorts of treasures.

It was the same at Iona. Every trumpery shell and weed the girl fancied, Stronachan must needs pick up and add to her store. She was hung all round with the strings of pearly shells proffered by the audacious Iona children.

And, lastly, as buoyant spirits gently faded into a calmer mood, there was the long, quiet sail homewards, while golden clouds stole round the sinking sun, and the western horizon grew purple beneath their shade.

Voices died away. The two, who sat apart, grew absolutely silent. At length:

'I have been watching your face for a long while, Janet,' said one.

'Have you? Why?'

'You have sat so still, and your eyes have grown larger and larger, and your lips have parted; and you look altogether as if you were drinking in this scene in one long, deep draught, to last you a lifetime.'

'Well, so I am,' said Janet gently.

'You seem to be fond of our Hebridean seas, and—and of these parts generally.'

'I love them—no one knows how I love them.'

'Enough to——' then the speaker paused.

‘Well?’ said Janet, half surprised, ‘enough to—what?’

‘To be ready to exchange your southern home—to take them—and us—to—to—pshaw!’ muttered the young man, indignant with his own stammering, ‘what a fool I am! Here, Janet, give me your cloak. The air grows chilly on the water directly the sun is down. We are much later than the steamboat, you know. We have not hurried. It is eight o’clock now. Let me draw on your cloak.’

But he did not draw it on well, or else what need to have been so long over the little ceremony, or to have leaned his head so near?

Janet found he was talking in her ear.

It seemed quite natural, and yet the world went round before her eyes.

Then came the inevitable pause.

‘I shall be eighteen in February,’ there came a whisper back at last, as a small, bare hand was yielded to an impetuous clasp. ‘Am I so very young?’

‘He has just spoken to me, and I have told him that nothing more must be said at present. I told him she would be eighteen in February,’ quoth Sir Thomas Greythorpe, on the morning after this, ‘and he was quite willing to wait till then. He is a very good fellow, and of course it is a good match. I am delighted that *something* has come of all this fuss, though not in the way we expected. To think of its being Janet, and not Isabella at all! Well, now, if we had only not been in such a hurry yesterday we could have gone so comfortably in that yacht, too. Old Stewart is quite at our disposal. He has sent a most civil message about a sail to Fort William to-day, and to some other place to-morrow. We shall be acquainted with all the coast soon,’ jocularly. ‘Well, now, the only thing that I regret in this whole Scotch trip, is that we chucked our money away on that confounded Staffa boat yesterday—all for nothing. Mixing up with that rabble, and getting shoved and jostled, and eating their vile food, and paying through the nose for everything! How much better it would have been if we had gone quietly in old Stewart’s yacht—’

Janet, coming in at the moment, heard the last words.

The little rogue shook her head to herself with a smile.

‘I do not think it would have been better at all,’ thought she.

L. B. WALFORD.

On the Fighting Instinct.

THE student of Nature is generally, if not universally, supposed to be the very incarnation of Peace, and a well-developed organ of combativeness is considered decidedly out of place in happy Arcadie.

Nevertheless, the earth is one vast battle-ground, where all things living struggle for 'the survival of the fittest'—that great and inexorable law, from whose influence even the proud race of man is not exempt.

To the poet, perhaps, yon level field, where the offspring of the milky mothers gambol, is a playground of young mammalians, where Peace spreads her palm and happiness reigns supreme. His more prosaic brother admits the beauty of the pastoral scene, but does not lose sight of the fact that these frolicsome gambols are but a war-game—the embryo of sterner trials of strength, where horns shall clash, and skulls crack like eggshells, in the contest for supremacy. In the playground he hears but an echo of the Field of Mars, and sees in every sport the shadow of the god of war.

I do not wish to demoralise you, gentle reader, with *horrida bella* as practised in the bull-ring; the boxing-match 'with two-ounce gloves;' the cockpit, where steel-spurred *Gallinaceæ* strike each other dead in order that the money of fools may pass to the pockets of knaves. The men, not the animals, make these things brutal: so we will stroll together far from the vulgar crowd; and if, perchance, during our rural rambles we happen upon a battle of pigmy heroes, conducted fairly and honourably, why, I don't see why we should incontinently flee the sight.

There is an instinct somewhere in the gentlest soul which thrills responsive to the tramp of war (resent it not, oh, fair ones!)—for I have not seldom seen a look which was not all disgust and horror gleam from a maiden's eyes when dogs or errand-boys have engaged in mortal combat, and rolled in dust

and fury on the side-walk. The genius of chivalry cannot exist wholly distinct from the din of arms, and would surely starve on arbitration, even though conducted with the tongues of men and angels.

We are civilised in Europe now, and we do not want to fight ; but we ostentatiously show our claws, and then complacently wait in 'armed neutrality,' save when barbarians appear. Then we whet our blades, and how gloriously we can do and die!—the latter event being in diamond type! Are we much better for our horror of bloodshed?

Is not the pen mightier than the sword? And with it are we not daily slaying—and worse than slaying—better men than ourselves, whilst we skulk behind a *nom de plume*, and dodge a law of libel which smilingly permits one to call a man a *liar*, and devours us relentlessly if we hint that he may be a *rogue*? Are we not literary assassins? Yet it is mean to hit a man below the belt, or to shoot him from behind a wall.

Is chivalry dead? and has the penman slain it? However, we have not yet developed a daily press for the beasts of the field; for the simple reason that they would not appreciate it sufficiently to make it a financial success, despite Sir John Lubbock's patient efforts towards the higher development of the mind canine: so, perhaps fortunately for them, the law of force prevails, the finest specimens of each class survive, and the weaker go to the wall, or, perchance, the stomachs, of their stronger brethren.

I think the Rev. J. G. Wood was the first to draw attention to the extraordinary fighting capabilities of moles. These clumsy, and apparently almost blind, masses of fur and sinew, can occasionally become fiends incarnate, veritable subterranean tigers; and with such energy do they attack each other that, utterly ignoring the presence of man, they will rough-and-tumble at his very feet, their enormously muscular little limbs working convulsively, and bones audibly cracking beneath the pressure of their jaws. No one who has not witnessed a tourney of this nature would credit the extraordinary activity and fury which is here displayed, for, unless they are forcibly parted, the battle seldom leaves both combatants in the land of the living.

Hedgehogs are occasionally cannibalistic, the larger ones, when hard up for a dinner, chasing the smaller at a wonderful rate, and devouring them without sauce or mercy when caught and conquered. Curiously enough, the vanquished animal seldom employs its strongest means of defence against its own species.

When attacked by dogs or foxes, it rolls up into the well-known ball form, presenting an almost impenetrable *chevaux de frise* to the nose and mouth of the aggressor, who, if he be a dog, not unfrequently departs annoyed and discomfited; although the fox, more cunning than his domesticated cousin, just bundles him off to the nearest pond, drops him in, and, when he indulges in a not unnatural natatory effort, quietly snaps him up. Perhaps the "urchin" deems that his trick won't pay when employed against a veteran, who knew how to curl himself up before the younger brother was born. Anyhow, he never attempts it, and the larger animal, holding him down by superior weight, placidly gnaws the foot or ear which comes most handy to his teeth, taking his time over it, and putting the poor little beastie to a lingering and torturous death. When they encounter their match, these creatures snort defiance, and, sticking all their spines on end, jump sideways, each endeavouring to prick his adversary, and looking out keenly for an exposed leg, which, when once captured, is held on to with the pertinacity of a bulldog.

Hares and rabbits confine their manoeuvres chiefly to a succession of vigorous kicks, delivered by the hind legs in the act of jumping over each other. A fight between two hares is a droll sight, appearing much like a jumping-match, the skipping exercise being kept up with tremendous energy and *verve*; but a blow from the leg of a hare is no laughing matter for the recipient, who occasionally finds himself knocked out of the world altogether. Nor is puss always as timid as we describe her.

Once, when taking a constitutional in a Hampshire lane, I heard a shrill cry, the prelude to the appearance of a half-grown leveret, which tumbled down the bank in company with a large animal of the ferret kind, probably a polecat, which had fastened on its neck, and was making short work of it, despite the desperate struggles of the victim.

Pity prompted me to come to the rescue; but I had barely commenced to obey the impulse, when, with a grunt and a scamper, a full-grown hare leapt through the gap, and attacked the polecat with the utmost ferocity. The latter, loth to lose a good dinner, took up an attitude of defence and defiance, but was immediately knocked over by a well-planted and resounding kick. Recovering itself, it gathered its limbs for a spring, and threw itself repeatedly upon the rodent, dodging, feinting, and guarding with lightning rapidity. The hare, however, was fairly roused to fury, for, seizing an unguarded moment, she bowled over the vermin with a

tremendous blow, and, following up her advantage before it could recover itself, drummed upon it until the life was well-nigh driven out of its body.

But the vitality of these creatures is wonderful, and, finding itself close to a small hole beneath the roots of an overhanging oak, it sneaked in and was lost to view; whilst puss, having cut a caper or two by way of a *pas de guerre*, withdrew with her wounded offspring, and I saw her no more.

Yet these representatives of the order *Mustellidæ* are hard fighters, for a friend of mine once witnessed a duel between an old grey rat and a weasel which lasted nearly an hour, and resulted in the annihilation of the former. The rat fought with great pluck and determination, but his antagonist was too much for him, and drew blood at every bite; whilst the rat, which displayed the utmost activity, rushing in again and again, failed to make much impression upon the yielding hide of the weasel. The latter fought in a very undemonstrative manner, appearing to act mostly upon the defensive; but his sharp teeth played havoc with the firm body of the rat, which finally retreated into a bundle of faggots, followed by the weasel. A great deal of scuffling and squeaking ensued, after which the rat was driven out into the open, and there killed. The weasel was, however, too exhausted to leave the spot, and the stick of the spectator made short work of him.

Weasels are fond of hunting in packs, at which time they are very ferocious, and, emboldened by numbers, have been known to attack men who have had the temerity to oppose their advance. They will track hares with the utmost perseverance, a chase sometimes lasting an entire day, and generally concluding with the capture of the wearied animal and a good supper for the weasels.

On open spaces and well-trodden meadow-paths one often finds the body of the little shrew-mouse. He is a hard fighter, and is said to fight all his duels *à la mort*; from which circumstance it is supposed by some that he selects these level spaces for combat. It has, however, been discovered that birds of prey are fond of catching and killing these little animals, and being for some reason best known to themselves unable to stomach the mousy morsels, deposit them in great numbers upon open spaces. Probably both causes combine to account for the numbers of the slain, for the combativeness of the creatures is admitted on all sides.

Amongst the *Gallinaceæ*, the pheasant may be considered

'cock of the roost,' for he will boldly enter the farmyard, and settle the military-looking barndoor fowl in a trice. Even the gamecock fares but little better, despite his superior agility. And hereby hangs a tale.

One fine morning a Wiltshire farmer was contemplating a field hard by his farmyard, at the farther side of which was a copse, the abode of pheasants. A fine gamecock, his special pride, was also taking a morning stroll, and occasionally lifting up his voice in praise of his own exploits and in deprecation of those of his neighbours. Suddenly, upon him came a loud whirr, a blaze of colour streaming from the copse, and, whilst Chanticleer was yet in the midst of his jubilation, he found himself turning a double somersault upon the grass. In vain he recovered himself, summoning all his energies to the fray; he was knocked over like a ninepin, and was soon scurrying full pelt for the shelter of the farm-buildings, the triumphant cock-pheasant in full cry, capsizing him every dozen yards, and following him right into the yard, where, had not the farmer arrived upon the scene, it would soon have gone hard with his pugnacious favourite.

On the following morning *Phasianus colchicus* again came down from the woods, and, willy nilly, engaged Chanticleer upon his own ground. But Agricola had been before him: a pair of steel spurs altered the situation, and the gaudy champion of the woods soon figured with bread-sauce on the farmer's table.

It was an unfair advantage, I admit, but the want of chivalry lay at the farmer's door, and must not be placed to the account of the fighting-cock.

Partridges are very poor fighters; but their lack of prowess is more than made up for by their drollery. The mode of procedure is as follows:—

When two partridges meet on the war-trail, they rush wildly up to within a foot of each other, and then commence to leap up and down as though they formed the extremities of an invisible see-saw. Presently one becomes tired, and, turning, runs as for his very life across the plain, followed by the other in fierce pursuit. When No. 1 has had enough running, he turns, and the see-saw process recommences, to be followed generally by the retreat of No. 2; and so on *ad infinitum*. Occasionally one of the warriors loses an eye; but this may be regarded as an accidental occurrence, probably equally deplored by aggressor and aggrieved.

Amongst smaller birds, perhaps none wage war more despe-

rately than the domesticated robin. It is said that he is guilty of parricide, the young ones chasing and slaying the parent before twelve months have passed over their youthful heads. Their first plumage is brown, but afterwards red—perhaps a Cain-mark, to distinguish them for their evil deeds! They follow up their battles with great pertinacity, and so frantic, and lost to all sense of outer danger do they become, that on two occasions I have picked them up, and held them in my hand, where they lay panting, but still holding on to each other with bills and talons. Once two of these tiny gladiators fell from a tree under which I was discussing the good fare of a picnic, and, utterly ignoring the situation, finished their argument in my lap.

An invalid friend of mine was amused for six consecutive days by the antics of two robins, which came regularly at 10.30 A.M. and fought a duel on the lawn outside his window. The combat invariably lasted until one or other became too exhausted to recover his legs, whereupon the victor would seize him and triumphantly drag him round the inclosure! The birds were so much alike in size and colour that he was unable to satisfy himself as to whether the same bird always conquered; but neither seemed seriously hurt, and after the sixth day they vanished, and he saw them no more.

The same gentleman, who was a close observer of nature, has a recollection of two cats which advanced daily from opposite ends of a long and lofty wall, and, meeting in the middle, fought with great fury until one or both were precipitated to the ground below, upon which the fight ceased immediately, the combatants remounting the wall, and basking peacefully side by side in the sunshine.

It would be interesting to know whether these cats fought for a wager, or simply to relieve the monotony of existence! There was, apparently, no lady in the case, for none appeared on the scene; and amongst the *Felidæ* it is usual for the disputed fair one to watch the fight from some point of 'vantage, which she does with an expression of *ennui* and lack of interest which it would be difficult to beat.

It would require a pen more eloquent than mine to describe Behemoth on the battle-field, or those great aerial combats where the snowy breasts of swan-legions redden beneath the talons of the Monarch of the Skies, or where Corvus the crow, wheeling his dusky squadrons, descends like a living thundercloud upon some fated rookery, dealing destruction in his course; but I may be

permitted to conclude with two anecdotes, one displaying the cautious cunning of the *Arachnidæ*, and the other proving, to my mind, a strongly developed chivalrous instinct in the brute.

In a pear-tree outside my window were two webs, inhabited by geometrical spiders of about equal bigness. For some reason or other the uppermost spider developed a strong feeling of animosity against the lower one, and this finally became so irresistible that he descended, with intent to do grievous bodily harm. Spider No. 2 was in no whit afraid, but struck an attitude expressive of defiance, and waited for the attack, which was not long in coming. No. 1 crept gingerly across the leaves to the edge of No. 2's web, which he seized and shook, at first tentatively, but afterwards with vigour. The owner, who was seated, after the manner of spiders, in the centre of his habitation, replied by violently oscillating his web and himself for the space of a minute, with such energy as to become almost invisible, owing to the speed of the vibrations.

Directly he ceased, the attacking force gave another strong pull, and advanced an inch or two farther into the web. Upon this the oscillation was repeated, to be again followed by another pull and advance. This having taken place three or four times, the defender lost patience, and, seeing his opportunity, dashed at the intruder, and a smart scuffle ensued, in which the invader got decidedly the worst of it, and was apparently going to receive the *coup de grâce*, when, to my extreme surprise, he suddenly swung out some eighteen inches from the web by means of a line which he had conveyed with him from the next branch, to which he betook himself for a rest. Presently, being refreshed, he descended, and, still carrying his line, crept along the bough as before, renewed the battle, lost a leg, and again swung into mid-air and safety. A small bead of moisture exuded from the wounded member; but, indifferent to his hurts, he returned again and again to the charge, and it was not until after he had received many wounds that he finally departed to his own domain. But for the means of swift retreat provided by his line, he must have fallen a prey to the gallant little defender, who would undoubtedly have chased and slain him had he only trusted to his legs when compelled to retire.

The Newfoundland dog is a particular favourite of mine. He is the most magnanimous fellow in the world, and small dogs may insult him with impunity unless a river happens to be near, when one too venturesome and impudent will sometimes experience an involuntary bath.

On one occasion lately, a particularly fine one was sitting on a wooden bridge discussing a bone, when a predatory mastiff came along, and being unable or unwilling to distinguish between *meum* and *tuum*, a smart altercation arose. So violent became the debate, that both suddenly overbalanced and fell into the stream beneath. The nearest landing-place was a hundred yards down, and to it the Newfoundland betook himself without much difficulty, and, after a good shake, was preparing to depart, when he suddenly became aware that the other dog, who was more of a soldier than a sailor, was wildly beating the water, and drowning as fast as he could drown. One look was enough. In went he of the shaggy coat, and seizing the other by the collar, brought his late enemy safe to land. The two dogs then eyed each other with a perfectly indescribable expression for some seconds, then silently and solemnly wagged their caudal appendages, and with dignity departed.

Some will, no doubt, say that this was but instinct; and they may be right, but I prefer to give my four-footed friend the benefit of the doubt.

J. A. BARTLETT.

Otters and Otter-Hunting.

Oe'r yon dank rushy marsh
The sly goose-footed prowler bends his course
And seeks the distant shallows. Huntsman, bring
Thy eager pack and trail him to his couch.

SOMERVILLE.

FOR the humane man who detests the cruel termination of most hunts, no sport is to be recommended so highly as otter-hunting. The ancient Greeks would have called it a chase which is no chase. Otter-hounds seldom kill their quarry; the elaborate provision of hounds and hunters to make pretence of killing it, and the long matutinal procession along the banks of some beautiful river, in reality constitute the sport. It may be gravely questioned whether any one, save a very small inner circle of otter-hunters, is pleased when an otter is killed. There are not too many otters, even on the wildest river of Devon or North Wales; and when one of them is done to death before the eyes of the hunt, almost every one regrets, not wholly for the sake of the poor animal, but with a view to future hunts, that the pack has been so successful. Of course the master would like to add another to his list of victims for the year, and three or four of his regular followers who dress in red stockings and cap and wear the button of the hunt affect to be much disappointed at the escape of the quarry. Every other person who has joined the morning's chase is pleased. They have had their sport with no drawback of a worrying kill. Their otter lives, like Sarhimner, the Scandinavian wild boar, to be hunted another day by the heroes. Even the trout-fisher thinks the otter does not do his fish so much harm as report says; and, after all, it is a tolerably harmless creature and a very interesting one. Not to hunt it would at once cause its extinction from the native fauna. Paradox though it seem, to fail to kill the otter after a morn's eager chase is to attain the secret end of the whole system of hunting it. It preserves the creature's life—as much as shooting half the young 'branchers' improves, renders more populous, and consolidates a rookery.

How the time and place of an appointment to hunt the otter ever gains publicity is astonishing. It is not as a rule advertised,

and yet every sporting man in the country-side, by some mysterious sympathy, is aware of the fixture betimes, and duly arrives at Three Man Bridge or Pen-y-llan Farm, as the master appears with the hounds. These are tolerably sure to be a rough-looking set of dogs, most masters preferring to draft into their pack any dog at all like a foxhound which manifests a strong love for fighting and swimming. Pedigrees of course are unknown; but here is Ranter, a fine well-set-up hound of black and tan colour; and there is Bellman, a low-legged, cross-tempered brute, covered with bristling black and white hair; the rest are all shapes and sizes, and a couple of them at once engage in hot earnest in a struggle with the master's fox-terriers before a start is made. A good deal of whipping reduces all to subjection, and shows the need of firmness with dogs as with children. Many of the packs of hounds still kept up in France for hunting the wolf are formed in the same fashion. Every dog that is of a surly temper, a determined fighter, never knowing when it is beaten, is at once retained; and a bloodthirsty, quarrelsome set of animals they look, ready apparently at the least encouragement, like Actæon's hounds, to fall upon their master and tear him limb from limb. Our otter-hounds are not yet so formidable; but even they look short-tempered and snappish early in the morning. It is advisable for a stranger to take no liberties with them. Mr. Collier's pack, so well known in North Devon, was formed in this manner, and seldom have we seen a stronger, more active set of hounds. In early life we believe that he possessed a pack which in winter hunted foxes, but in summer hunted otters equally well. The late 'Jack Russell' in his young days owned a pack with this convenient *penchant* for running after anything that would run away from them. At present it is more convenient, and secures a better pack, if hounds intended for otters are not allowed to chase other animals.

When the master moves onwards with his delighted pack, the 'meet' is seen to be of a motley character. Three or four country gentlemen and their sons advance with the master, while a country parson or two walk with them. Otter-hunting is the one kind of hunting tacitly conceded to the cloth, probably on account of its bloodlessness. The doctor with two young ladies succeeds. These young people are dressed sensibly in short petticoats and wear strong heavy boots, while the long staff they carry saves them many a fall in slippery places. A miscellaneous 'tail' follows, consisting of several farmers, a handful of labourers, the miller

and his man, and a river watcher or two. The regular huntsmen and whips are splashing through the river among the swimming hounds, and beating an island overgrown with scrubby herbage and bushes of willow and brambles. 'Toot, toot, toot!' sounds the master's little horn. 'Lector, Lector!' he cries cheerily. 'To him, my beauties! Now, Marvel! at him, Marvel!' 'Toot, toot, toot!'—and all press eagerly on, while the hounds whimper and sniff about, and share all the keenness of their master. Down the river the little band go, quickly covering a couple of miles with no result save a false alarm at a reach of the river beset with large bushes of pink-flowered willow herb and with two or three decrepit willows near the water's edge. Here there is much excitement, and many who had not intended getting wet find it necessary to leap in and beat bushes, and cheer on the hounds in their excitement. It does not signify. No one ever catches cold with fresh water so long as he keeps moving. 'Toot, toot, toot!' they have passed onwards into another parish, and three or four men are seen running down from the farmhouse on the hill to join the little company. The parson has had enough of it, and bethinks himself of his Sunday's sermon yet on the anvil; so slips up a lane which abuts on the river and quietly goes home by the lonely field-paths that he knows so well.

Hunter though he is by reason of that fierce spirit of pursuing, running down, and killing their game, which so strongly marks Englishmen, the parson's eye and mind are carefully educated to observe natural beauty, and his morning ramble has been to him a veritable pilgrimage of loveliness. The glints of flying sunshine on green meadow and darker wood; the clear, lustrous azure of the sky; the balmy breeze stealing up the river like whispers from the sea; the oaks and hedgerows dressed in midsummer pomp; the blue shades on the distant Welsh hills; singing finch and terrified rabbit; the nymphs' gardens and swaying white-flowered crowfoot and fragrant soapwort, all set in the framework of the river's windings and drenched with morning dew—his eye has taken in all this feast of beauty. Few people have any idea how the dullness of a country parish may be alleviated by the many rustic tastes possessed by such a clergyman, and by his accustoming himself to find beauty at every turn in his paths, and especially by the river. It is, and it must be, dull at most places in the country; therefore it is wise to cultivate rustic tastes, and to be ready to take an interest in the many infinitely little things in themselves which will daily catch the eye, if accustomed to

see them, in fields and lanes. But after a long check, where a brook runs into the river near a swamp overgrown with butterbur and 'sallies' (as Herefordshire folk term willows), the scent is again caught, and away the merry hounds go in full cry up the river, while a motley assemblage runs and leaps and cuts corners, and is devoured by excitement, which ere long dies out, no one could tell why, and gives place to an answering apathy on the part of all save the master and his subordinates. They work on bravely, cheering and running to the front, and trying every thicket, but in vain. So five miles are traversed by a much reduced band of sportsmen, and now disappointment, fatigue, and hunger claim their tale of victims. Some have given in; others slunk off to the right or left, according as they have friends; a carriage ordered to wait at Harold's Bridge takes four or five girls home. Three or four are picnicking under a shady tree upon sandwiches which a thoughtful man brought with him. The sun is getting higher in the heavens, and the air becoming proportionately hotter. Only the enthusiasts who wear the club uniform are now eager and still follow the master's stalwart frame. There's a whimper! No; it was a mistake. This last disappointment is too keen for poor human nature, and the downcast officials now press on through a more monotonous country, while the rest have deserted, some in one way, some in another. Still the devoted officials push forwards, until another ten miles on they, too, knock off disgusted and turn in to breakfast.

Occasionally a chase in earnest happens. For two or three miles the otter, now running on the bank, now diving and crossing from one side to the other, perhaps while the river is in flood, leads its pursuers an exciting race. They have to swim, often with considerable danger, from one bank to the other; they miss the trail, overrun it; sometimes see their quarry to keep up the general interest, and are kept alive themselves by the excitement and baying of the hounds. Fairy, ever the most forward of the hounds, has seized and bitten him several times, but as often has been compelled to let go as the otter has dived in ten feet of water. There is a cry of 'Tail him! tail him!' but no one, owing to the rush of water under the steep banks, is able to perform this feat. Once more the quarry is seen rising for breath, once more Fairy attacks. The poor thing's eyes glaze in death, and it sinks in a deep hole, whence it is impossible to extricate it. Their game is killed, indeed; but all feel that it is a somewhat inglorious termination to the long chase. Were it any better to have the poor

animal slain in the midst of the panting, bloodthirsty pack, and to see it torn to pieces in a few minutes? After the excitement has subsided, not a few of the pursuers must feel ashamed of their feat and sorry for the poor victim, while Horace's verse rises to their lips:

Leporem venator ut alta
In nive sectetur, positum sic tangere nolit.

And yet the otter is a terrible foe to trout, it will be said, and deserves death for the devastation it wreaks in many a stream tenanted by trout or grayling. It may be so, and at times it is not particular in restricting its ravages to fish; it angers farmers by eating their ducklings and even—so saith report—in hard weather their young pigs. Still, it is hardly worthy of being done to death with hounds, and whooping, and numbers. So long (whispers the scrupulous conscience) as an otter can be hunted without killing it, there can be no more pleasant sport. If it must be killed, let it be by a gin or a gun. It is clearly overmatched in most conditions of the water when hunted by hounds.

The cruelty of the proceeding may be somewhat condoned by the reflection that otter-hunting induces much kindly feeling and divers opportunities for that kind of friendship which the old moralist describes as eating many bushels of salt together. After an otter-hunt hospitable country houses receive the huntsmen gladly and order luncheon; and then tennis or archery succeed until dewy eve. On this view otter-hunting is decidedly one of the *agrément*s of the country. Often, too, a merry party, after a long ramble by the river, arrives at some 'haunt of ancient peace'—an Elizabethan house, maybe, bosomed in limes, with clematis and that loveliest of creepers, *Tropæolum speciosum*, blossoming profusely over its old grey mullions—where the dining-room is thrown open to the hungry rout. Cold beef and lamb quickly disappear, while many a glass of sherry, followed by a nip of something more potent, maintains the character of the house for hospitality. One of the most enviable pleasures granted by wealth is the ability thus to entertain a whole countryside at a moment's notice, to keep up a wide circle of friends, and send all away refreshed and happy.

Sometimes a more eventful termination attends a day's otter-hunting. Mr. Henderson, in his pleasant book, *My Life as an Angler* (ed. 1879, p. 160), tells a story of the Duke of Athol's otter-hounds hunting one of these creatures on the banks of the

Tweed, which took refuge in its haunt, behind strong roots and sticks, near the famous Sprouston Dub. Little way was made in clearing off these obstacles. 'Seeing this, Lord John Scott, the brother of the Duke of Buccleuch, began himself to dig on the top of the embankment, and soon succeeded in making a hole which led direct to the inner retreat of the defender. He then announced his intention of trying conclusions with the otter in his own person. Casting aside coat, waistcoat, and necktie, he boldly entered the hole, carrying a large open clasp-knife across his mouth. Gradually forcing his way onward, he at length almost disappeared, nothing but the soles of his boots being visible to the eyes of the anxious spectators. Again strange sounds were heard, followed by a dead silence. The crowd outside could bear it no longer, and loud cries arose of "Dig him out, he's suffocating!" Happily, the soles of the boots were soon seen to move, and then the legs and body began to emerge slowly, as if exhausted. At length Lord John came out into the daylight, holding in his outstretched hand a large otter, quite dead. How much of the victory may have been due to the terriers, how much to Lord John, can never be decided; but certain it is that, face to face in that narrow den of darkness, man and beast had striven for life, and that victory rested with the former. The conqueror's appearance, however, showed at what a price it had been won—arms, hands, and chest torn, clawed, and bleeding, told their tale only too clearly. So terrible a spectacle awed the crowd, and for some minutes a deep silence reigned over all. Then, when their minds had comprehended the bravery of the man, such cheers arose from every one present as do good to honest hearts.' And this not being enough for the crowd's enthusiasm, they chaired the hero, bleeding and torn as he was. Sometimes a still more tragical termination ensues, as when, some ten years ago, a master of otter-hounds in the Lake district was drowned in his eagerness to swim a deep pool, owing to his advanced age and a heavy flood raising the stream much above its usual height.

The number of packs of otter-hounds in the kingdom varies but slightly from year to year. Thirteen may be taken as the average, containing about 170 couples of hounds. The Hon. Geoffrey Hill's, on the borders of Herefordshire and Radnor, is perhaps the best, as it certainly is the largest, of these. It is made up of $20\frac{1}{2}$ couples, and kills from forty to fifty otters annually. In the present year of grace, however, there are seventeen packs in existence, as the sport is becoming more popular,

and can be pursued in countries where it is not so easy to kill the fox before hounds, owing to the natural configuration of hill and dale. In the Welsh counties and the marches adjacent, the annual visit of the otter-hounds causes much excitement, perhaps more than does a meet of her Majesty's staghounds. We remember a morning train, at a little station in one of the localities named, bringing a number of otter-hunters up the valley, the orders given to the engine-driver being to stop when he met the otter-hounds, which he accordingly did. Most trout-fishers know the tracks of an otter, and have repeatedly found fish lying on the bank with a bite taken out of the shoulder, or a hapless toad's hind legs, to show where the amphibian has been feeding. Nothing is easier than to trap the otter, especially in winter, by setting a steel gin under the water just where the animal generally leaves the stream, or on the bank where its favourite run is; for the otter is a creature of habit, fond of swimming and journeying at night along the same route it took the night before. So Falstaff's jest is hardly warranted by facts:—

P. Henry : An otter, Sir John ! why an otter ?

Falstaff : Why, she's neither fish nor flesh ; a man knows not where to have her. (*K. Henry IV.* 1st Part, iii. 3.)

Walton's second chapter contains a delightful otter-hunt, wherein Killbuck, Sweetlips, and Ringwood figure as excellent hounds, and the same conceit is maintained:—

Pisc. : I pray, honest Huntsman, let me ask you a pleasant question ; do you hunt a beast or a fish ?

Huntsman : Sir, it is not in my power to resolve you ; I leave it to be resolved by the college of Carthusians. . . . I have heard the question hath been debated among many great clerks, and they seem to differ about it, yet most agree that her tail is fish. (*Compleat Angler*, II.)

The easiest mode, however, of killing an otter is to wait for it at night by the shallows of some river which it frequents, and shoot it as it walks up them.

No naturalist has so carefully observed and written on the habits of the otter as Charles St. John, in his *Sports of the Highlands*. In particular, he points out that in the winter many of the river and lake otters travel downwards towards the sea, obeying at the time the almost universal law of migration which prevails among so many birds and creatures of the North. The otter is a very affectionate animal—not only in the sense of being devoted

to its mate or its young, but also to its master when tamed. This is a comparatively easy process. We remember Frank Buckland showing us a tame otter which took fish out of his hand, and which was kept in a coal-hole at the Museum buildings, Kensington. It ultimately escaped into the park, and led to a good many foolish paragraphs being published in the daily papers by frightened people who had seen the poor animal. 'I was rather amused,' says St. John (chap. xii. *ut sup.*), 'at an old woman living at Sluie on the Findhorn, who, complaining of the hardness of the present times when "a puir body couldna get a drop smuggled whisky or shot a rae without his lordship's sportsman's finding it out," added to her list of grievances that even the otters were nearly all gone, "puir beasties." "Well, but what good could the otters do you?" I asked her. "Good, your honour? Why, scarcely a morn came but they left a bonny grilse on the scarp down yonder; and the *vennison* was none the waur of the bit the puir beasts eat themselves." When it is added that the otter's food largely consists of eels, so that it is not wholly destructive to trout, and that in all probability, like the falcons among grouse, it acts as a destroyer of weakly and diseased fish which might otherwise infect a river with *saprolegnia* or its kindred fungi, country gentlemen may extend a little allowance to a curious little seen creature. Otter hunters, *per se*, will plead for its life for other reasons; but, as naturalists and lovers of the animals whose curious habits lend so much charm to a country life, we would strongly protest against that wantonness of cruelty which hands over otters, polecats, weasels—almost all the native quadrupeds—to ignorant gamekeepers, fancying that they fulfil their duty best when they kill everything that creeps or flies that is not game. It will be a blessed thing for the birds and animals of the woodlands when country gentlemen exercise a little discrimination in the general slaughter of wild creatures that goes on for the sake of pheasants. From a moral point of view the country regards owners of land as trustees for the sake of their brethren at large, not justified if they shoot down to the verge of extinction so many singular birds and beasts which afford pleasure to the rest of the community. In 1188, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that there were beavers in the river Teifi and elsewhere in North Wales; where are they now? Where will English otters be in 1920? The naturalist's motto with regard to them, as with all other so-called lower forms of life, is—*Live and let live*.

At the Sign of the Ship.

IT is time that the line should be firmly drawn between criticism and reviewing. In the August number of *Harper's Magazine* (which, by the way, contains a thrilling account of Custer's last fight) Mr. Howells does not seem to draw this line. He once more endeavours to abate the insolence of 'critics,' assures them that criticism has usually tried to depress originality, tells them that, being anonymous, they are tempted to be savage, and, generally, labours to make them 'know their place.' To myself he seems to overrate their influence—and their savagery. The ordinary anonymous reviewer is (as the Scotch lassie said of a modest lover) 'senselessly ceevil.' He is good-natured to a degree. Occasionally he hits hard, and sometimes below the belt. Occasionally he may have a bad motive—a motive of envy, spite, or personal dislike. But on the other hand, as Mr. Thackeray said, authors should make up their minds to a great deal of 'honest enmity,' and 'to be abused for good as well as bad reasons.' This is a hard lesson for authors, yet they should learn it. The anonymous is not necessarily, nor often, the dishonest reviewer. Mr. Howells tells a parable of a journal, the *Clarion*, which 'is opposed to So-and-So's book.' Now if a reviewer lets his editor impose a task on him, if he attacks the books merely because *The Clarion* is opposed to them, he is selling his soul extremely cheap. But I believe such a bargain is rare. If the reviewer finds that he differs from the literary policy of his paper, he says, 'Send the book to some other man.' It is a mistake, to be sure, for a journal to have a 'policy' about an author's books at all; each should be judged on its merits. But there is no need, in any case, for the reviewer to dissemble. After reviewing for many years, I myself can only recall two cases in which an editor made any suggestions. One of the books was Mr. Rossetti's first poems, the other was a volume of Mr. Matthew Arnold's. The editor in each case said, 'If you don't like the work send it back, for I do.' I did like it,

in each instance; but had I disliked it, no harm would have been done. Nobody's conscience would have been wronged. So much for honesty, and, as for savagery, many signed French criticisms appear more amusingly cruel than the excesses of our anonymous press. For various reasons one might agree with Mr. Howells, and wish that all reviews were signed. But the public is of another opinion, and a reviewer can always act on Mr. Howells' excellent advice, and say nothing, anonymously, that he would hesitate to put his name to. Most of the names would be quite unknown, would tell the reader and author very little.

* * *

In short, the brief contemporary 'notice' is not criticism. It may be merely an item of literary news, or a brief summary—a useful thing in itself—or it may be a puff, or it may be a spiteful insult. It has not room to be a studied criticism, nor is the knowledge of any man so encyclopædic that he can do a dozen books briefly, yet each with the touch of a specialist. The consciousness of this, and human kindness therewith, makes most reviewers good-natured. An author gets little good or bad from them. About familiar and prolific writers they keep little *clichés* on stereotyped forms. For my own part I know exactly what the reviewer will say about any new venture of my own. 'The versatile and industrious Mr. L. New field. Accustomed lightness of touch. Desultory. Inaccurate. May be read without fatigue. Opinions may still be divided as to Mr. L.'s conclusions.' That is the humour of it; not exhilarating, but quite kindly and harmless. And what more has a man a right to expect? If I have developed a theory about the religion of the Patagonians, what can Jones, who does the notices in the *Clarion*, know about the matter? What can he care about the matter? He has to turn out a score of lines of copy, and it were irrational vanity in me to expect him to study half a library, and wring his brow with thought over me and my Patagonians. Or if I write a novel—which may fate forbid—it is a thousand to one that I neither excite Jones's enthusiasm, nor drive him to a fury of indignation. That is reserved for more powerful and passionate authors, who should be proud of ecstatic praise or violent condemnation—from Jones. They have, in either event, made Jones 'sit up,' as the saying is, and that is something. I only once remember having made him assume this attitude, with a translation of a Greek poet, and he hit out at me rarely. The subject of punishment

merely giggled, and it were well for all authors to laugh instead of sitting down gravely to call Jones a treacherous savage, or going about to discover his name and habitation. Who cares where he is, or who he is? He has a right to his opinion, and one likes to hear him express it as if he meant it. But Mr. Howells appears to be wounded when people differ from his views of what fiction ought to be, and prove by the energy of their exclamations that he has hit them.

* *

He is always hitting me, for one, because to me criticism seems more valuable and other than he thinks. I mean reasoned and considered writing on the tried masterpieces of the world, or even ingenious and entertaining writing about new books. To have a clever and accomplished man telling you, in his best manner, what thoughts come into his mind after reading even a new novel, is no trifling pleasure among the pale and shadowy pleasures of the mind. The topic may be Dante, or may be only Marie Bashkirtseff, yet the ideas which it helps to suggest to a competent and well-read critic are agreeable, and not mere valueless verbiage. This is apart from his verdict of praise or condemnation: what one enjoys is not the verdict, but the insight into another nature. Not that even the verdict is wholly worthless; it attracts your attention to the book discussed; you can read it and make up your own mind. One does not condemn a book unseen, because the *Scots Thistle* or the *Bungay Beacon* has disparaged it. The public which reads is not so easily led, and the larger reading public elects its own favourites in contempt, or in ignorance, of reviews. A very much smaller public reads real criticism, ancient or modern, of Sainte-Beuve, of Villemain, of Aristotle, of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for that matter, and thence derives matter for thought. It is among the most innocent occupations of leisure, and, to men who themselves are authors, is among the most useful. Mr. Howells says that Canon Farrar says he has learned nothing from his critics. Possibly not, but there are authors and authors, critics and critics. Would Mr. Howells say he could learn nothing from Longinus, from Horace, from Boileau, from Goethe? Does he, in turn, expect to teach nothing? Clearly he expects, or wishes, to teach a good deal, and, if he can do this as a critic, he should not despair of criticism.

* *

For lack of signed names, Mr. Howells says, a journal is made to seem inconsistent. Once, for example, as he reminds us, there was a tiff between Mr. Thackeray and the *Saturday Review*. As far as my memory goes, the *Saturday* had objected to Mr. Thackeray's habit of talking about himself, and taking you into his confidence. No doubt he carried this to excess in his decline, as in *Philip* and the *Roundabout Papers*. He was always sensitive, as even modern authors occasionally are, and he replied by inventing the mild nickname of the *Superfine Review*. Now, on the other hand, says Mr. Howells, the *Saturday* is a champion of Mr. Thackeray's genius, and this looks inconsistent. Circumstances have altered, that is all; the genius remains, the old opponent is converted, and probably does not mind being inconsistent. Mr. Gladstone lately blamed Wellhausen's inconsistency because in twenty years he has altered his opinion about the date of the Psalms. In twenty years even Mr. Gladstone may have altered his mind on some matters, and probably the Review which once had a dispute with a great living writer is not discredited because it admires his excellencies, and does not lay the former stress on the faults of his early old age.

* * *

Travelling lately, and in lack of a book, I read the first half of *Vanity Fair* again. It is even more delightful than it was. I suppose that, every five years, one learns better to appreciate this cynic, whose advice to young people is that they should 'learn early to love and to pray.' The meeting of Becky and Amelia on the day of Quatre Bras, the passion of Amelia, her sudden lapse into a childlike weakness, admiring George's scarlet scarf that she wears, and smoothing the pillow on which her husband's head will never lie, seem to me worthy of Shakspeare, or at least of Webster or Ford. Surely it is the highest genius which thus endures, and masters and touches us again, after so many years of intimate familiarity.

* * *

There has been an examination paper in *Pickwick*, why not one in *Vanity Fair*?

1. What do you know of Mary Box, of Mr. Chopper (state his Christian name), of the Rev. Silas Hornblower? Have you any later information about this gentleman and his wife?

2. Where did Mr. James Crawley reside on the first night of his arrival at Brigh'on? What favourite accompanied him thither?

3. Who laid the odds, and what odds, against Kangaroo? What charge of unsportsmanlike conduct was brought against Captain Rawdon Crawley?

4. State the second title in Lord Southdown's family.

5. Give the circumstances of Mrs. Major O'Dowd's education. What was her favourite consolatory reading?

6. Discuss the relations of Sir Pitt Crawley and his tenantry, and state the results of Dr. Squills' conversation with Mr. Clump.

7. What did Miss Sharp call her maternal stock before they were Montmorencys?

These are only 'pass' questions, but people who cannot answer them might take it as a hint to read *Vanity Fair* again. Fifty years hence who will remember such details in the works of any contemporary novelist? Who, indeed, remembers them a week after reading them?

* * *

A writer in the *Field* is very justly indignant with some eyed hooks now being sold. The eye is turned down; only the very finest gut can, by any accident, be thrust through it, and the hole breaks if you clear it with a pin. It is unpleasant to find yourself with no hooks but these, when trout are rising, especially in the dusk. A wise man would put some hooks on lengths of gut before going out, but nobody is wise at all hours. Eyed-hooks have many advantages; among others they do not flick off easily, but these pernicious hooks will ruin their reputation. It is a curious experience to come from English streams, where trout abound, but the miller has shut off the water, to Scotch streams, where there is a wealth of water, but trout are absent, or, at best, are very shy. Would Test trout grow large if placed in the Ken or the Yarrow? Or would they dwindle in the new stream, and become tiny, strong for their size, and excessively cautious? Probably the latter is the more probable alternative; and, anyhow, few Scotch anglers would take Thomson's advice, and return the small fry. Hard by where I write all the river trout are tiny, but there is a tarn, shallow and weedy, where they thrive as in the Test or Kennet. But, apparently, no one can beguile these monsters, and nobody knows why they are so aldermanic in

weight and girth, while in larger and likelier lochs, they seldom reach a pound in weight. The naturalist has still a great deal to learn about trout. They are very human. A big trout will leave a small neighbour tranquil, till it is hooked. Then, seeing him in trouble, the big trout makes a rush at him, swallows him, and occasionally gets hooked himself. Trout are capable of *ennui*. I have seen a huge fellow, under a bridge on the Test, yawn with the utmost sincerity. These creatures, so cunning when you offer them a fly, will bite at a crumpled ball of white paper, in places where the passers-by throw bread to them. The temptation to fish for them with pellets of bread is almost too strong for human nature. But what would happen if you were found out? Instant ruin, social and professional, would be the sinner's portion for ever. Another form of ruin comes from a bad habit of rod-makers. They make the hollow canes, which hold two tops, so narrow that the tops get jammed, and can hardly be extricated. This is a fault very easy to avoid.

* * *

The diversions of Fashion seem odd to persons who are not of that world. Thus one reads, in an Australian paper, that auctions are the mode, that men are put up and bid for, in assemblies, by the women. One gentleman went at five and twopence; a wicket-keeper of eminence, now eclipsed by the incomparable Mr. McGregor, fetched 100,000*l*. A soldier who has been in many a difficult place topped the market at a million. Can our ancestors have known a similar modish game? 'I can tell you nothing of Gay,' says Pope, 'since he was raffled for, and won back by his Duchess,' the Duchess of Queensberry, with whom Gay 'lived, and was lapped in cotton, and had his plate of chicken and his saucer of cream, and frisked, and barked, and wheezed, and got fat, and so ended.' Duchesses don't give us chicken and cream any more, but it must have been pleasant to be won in a raffle by an agreeable Duchess. No such happy rewards seem to come from the new auctions of men, which we read of in the fashionable London chronicles of Australian newspapers.

* * *

The Psychical Society seems to neglect the Morality of Ghosts. Anybody would think that the obstreperous and lark-some ghosts in the Haunted Houses celebrated by the Society,

had been practical jokers in this life. They make odd noises, they toss furniture about, they are full of their fun. But, in this life, they were depressed and suicidal ladies. Why has their character altered so much? Psychology says nothing about this by the pens of Mr. Podmore or Mr. Myers. Have you marked how frequently ghosts, in haunted houses, tug the bed-clothes off their victims? I think Suetonius mentions this ghostly practical joke, in the case of a Roman emperor, and it certainly was played off in the last *Psychical* anecdote which has reached me. Yet we never hear of a ghost that set booby traps, or made apple-pie beds. These are later inventions; ghosts are very conservative and do not march with the age. They are still content with the pranks which disturbed the repose of Caligula.

* * *

Among the people who went to Mr. Stanley's wedding, how many noticed that, in the cloisters, they trod over the heads of two dead women, as famous in their day as he—over the heads of Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Aphra Behn? There they lie, very modestly, under plain stones, the beauty and the wit. She whom Steele wrote and sighed for, she for whom Mohun had Mountford stabbed, she whom the noble earl was bidden not to disclaim,

But publicly espouse the dame,
And say, G—— d—— the town:

The Town hath quite forgotten them, their memory failing with the brilliance of their eyes, and he who writes heard a lady ask, 'Who was Mrs. Bracegirdle?' Yet she knew who Miss Terry is, well enough, and Fame is Vanity, and wit and beauty are most perishable goods, and the herd of us who miss them, miss very little. Or is it that young ladies know very little, in spite of the Higher Education of Women?

* * *

In March the world was bare,
Beneath the changeful sky;
It lies adorned and fair,
Wrapped soft in sunny air,
With flowers everywhere,
Now in July.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

But in bleak March, unchilled,
 The thrushes warbled high,
 And all the woods were filled
 With songs the blackbirds trilled —
 The sweet bird-notes are stilled
 Now in July.

In March the cold rain fell,
 But little heeded I,
 For I was loved so well.
 Love, have we lost the spell?
 Is no such tale to tell,
 Now in July?

FRANCES WYNNE.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR has received parcels of illustrated papers and magazines from
 Mrs. Maxwell, Kettendon, and H. S. H.

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The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

*The Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,
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